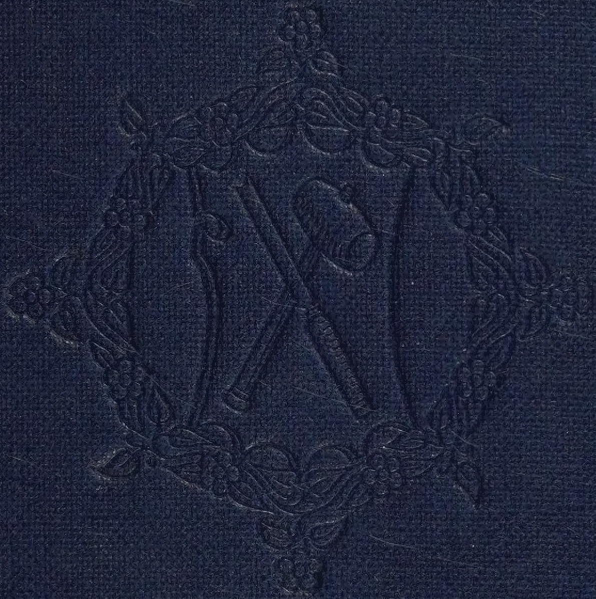
ENGLISH CHURCH
◆ WOODWORK ◆



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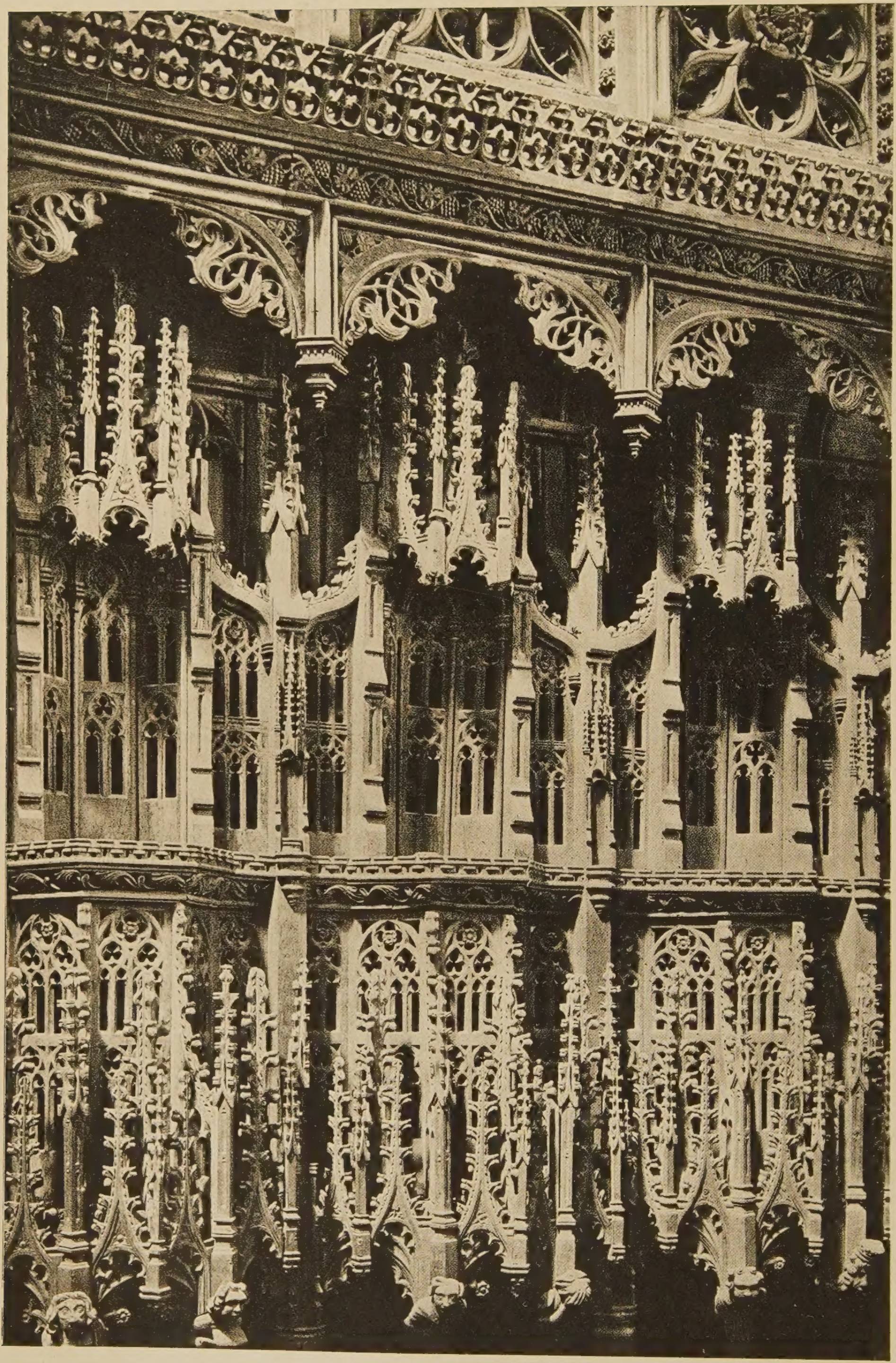
ENGLISH CHURCH
WOODWORK



BEVERLEY MINSTER, DETAIL OF STALLS

ENGLISH CHURCH WOODWORK

A STUDY IN CRAFTSMANSHIP DURING THE MEDIÆVAL PERIOD A·D·1250-1550

BY

F·E·HOWARD

&

F·H·CROSSLEY

SECOND EDITION

LONDON: B·T·BATSFORD: LTD·
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1927

"*He that hewed timber afore out of the thick trees*
was known to bring it to an excellent work.
But now they break down all the carved work thereof
with axes and hammers."—PSALM LXXIV. 6, 7, P.B.V.

Printed in Great Britain at THE DARIEN PRESS, *Edinburgh.*

IN MEMORY OF

HERBERT BATSFORD

WHOSE LOYAL, GENEROUS, AND
UNFAILING FRIENDSHIP WAS THE
PRIVILEGE OF THE ILLUSTRATOR,
AND AT WHOSE SUGGESTION THIS
BOOK WAS UNDERTAKEN

First Edition - - 1917
First Edition, Reprinted 1919
Second Edition - - 1927

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

It is a cause for satisfaction that a second edition of this book is called for; it surely indicates an awakening interest in the remains of mediæval woodwork. A growing knowledge means increasing protection from destruction, neglect, and over restoration. The text of the book remains unaltered, but there are many additional illustrations, including sixteen full-page collotypes.

FRED. H. CROSSLEY.

April 1927.

PREFACE

Mr Herbert Batsford has asked me to explain in a foreword the genesis of this book. For over twenty years it has been my habit to spend six weeks of each year in studying and measuring up the mediæval church woodwork of England. During the earlier years this was accomplished with the aid of a sketchbook, but the impossibility of purchasing photographs of detail, and the overwhelming mass of material found, compelled me to resort to the aid of the camera. The negatives mounted up by stages into thousands, and Mr Batsford, overhauling the accumulated result, was anxious it should take some permanent form, and proposed a book on the subject. Two points became accentuated as the evidences were brought together: the superiority of the fifteenth century over all other periods, and the differences of type in construction and detail in the different parts of England. This, as far as my knowledge extends, has never been understood, or if so, it has been ignored by our restoring architects and commercial furnishing firms, and it is largely owing to this ignorance that the modern attempts to copy mediæval woodwork have produced only dry bones, mechanical and dull, for the true spirit of Gothic art has not been breathed into them. This spirit cannot be understood by studying textbooks or copying a few standard examples; no living art is hidebound, but works out its own salvation in innumerable channels of independent thought and methods of craftsmanship. One never tires of examining the fragments of carved woodwork yet remaining in our now furbished and smartened churches, for there is always something to learn, some fresh idea to register.

But how to filter all this material into classified order was the rub. I only knew one man capable of adequately dealing with it, and to him I turned. Mr Howard is responsible for the text, and by his own investigations and the evidences placed before him has produced a volume of original research in which the whole subject has been re-weighed, re-classified, and dealt with from a fresh point of view.

The difficulty of selecting about 380 illustrations from over 10,000 at our disposal has been a heavy task. The guiding principle has been to select the lesser known examples where they illustrated the point required, using the better known subjects only where necessary. I am indebted to many friends for their ever ready generosity and kindness, especially Dr G. Granville Buckley, F.S.A., who placed the whole of his collection of photographs at our disposal, also to Mr G. C. Druce, F.S.A., and Mr W. Maitland for similar favours, and to many others whose names are recorded elsewhere. It only remains for me to thank Mr Herbert and Mr Harry Batsford for their continuous counsel, advice, and help, and for the liberal way they have produced the book.

FRED. H. CROSSLEY.

19 SHAVINGTON AVENUE,
CHESTER, *January* 1917.

Since the above was written, and as this volume is going through the press, we have to record the death of Mr Herbert Batsford. Not only have we thereby lost a national asset, but his personal friends mourn a gap in their friendships which cannot be replaced.

Vivacious, energetic, witty, keen at work, unerring in his instinct for the right touch, indifferent to the amount of work entailed in producing it, he was withal generous, helpful, and sympathetic to the various needs of those who came under his influence, generating the best from the authors who wrote for him, supplementing and enlarging their knowledge by the stores of material he accumulated at his hand.

WRITER'S PREFACE

Of late years there has been a distinct revival of interest in Gothic art. Several factors have brought about this result, notably the advent of the cycle and motor, making it an easy matter to visit remote places which were formerly almost inaccessible, while the increasing popularity of the camera has enabled many to obtain really valuable records of the wonderful work of the past. Moreover, the improvement in processes of reproduction affords the opportunity of spreading the results of their labours far and wide. In fact, modern science has, to a certain degree, become the handmaid of mediæval art.

This aftermath of the Gothic revival is concerned chiefly with the decorative side of ancient architecture, with rood-screens, parcloses, pulpits, benches, and font-covers; all the delightful things without which even the most beautiful buildings seem comparatively dull and lifeless.

Among the modern books dealing with this aspect of mediæval craftsmanship, there has been no book covering the whole range of English Gothic Woodwork. This is the purpose of the present volume, which is analytical rather than topographical in treatment. It makes a real attempt to explain what were the motives of the mediæval wood-worker; to ascertain why benches were arranged in a certain manner, and what principles actuated him in planning stalls. Again, an effort has been made to give a practical analysis of the various methods in which various problems, constructional or artistic, were solved by these inspired craftsmen. Yet another point, which the authors have consistently kept in view, is the existence and the great importance of the various local styles and provincialities which exist in various parts of the country, a subject generally glossed over or ignored. How little this important subject is as yet understood by even comparatively enlightened architects or antiquaries may be gauged by the self-complacency with which they place reproductions of Midland woodwork into Devonshire churches, or carry out work, inspired by the art of East Anglia, in the ancient buildings of the Midlands. To lay stress on the necessity for consistency in this matter is not fussy antiquarianism. It must be obvious that the woodwork of a district was evolved to harmonise, however different the style of its ornament, with the local type of parish church, and that a screen of the Devon type, however beautiful in itself, looks dumpy and "busy" in so lofty and austere a building as an East Anglian church, while to introduce a lofty screen of the Norfolk type into a low West-country church would not only be an artistic failure, but a matter of physical impossibility.

The illustrations, chosen from a vast collection from all parts of the country, give a good general idea of the extraordinary wealth of material in the country. Very many examples, some of them of great beauty and importance, have never been illustrated before. Others, better known, have been included on account of their exceptional beauty and interest, or because of their great rarity. Besides the photographic illustrations, a number of measured drawings has been introduced. With a few exceptions they are of entirely fresh subjects. Their purpose is to give an idea of the scale of the examples illustrated photographically, and to throw light on the methods of mediæval design.

It is the hope of the authors that this book may be of real service to fellow enthusiasts; that it may lead many to whom mediæval art is but a name to love and appreciate it; that the craftsman of to-day may pore over the illustrations and be humble; and that it may serve as a check to the unnatural lust for destruction, or the more reasonable, but almost equally harmful, passion for over-restoration.

F. E. HOWARD

24 Polstead Road,
Oxford, *January* 1917.

NOTE OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT

For photographs to complete our survey of "Church Woodwork," we are indebted to many kind friends who placed their work at our disposal, and to others who, although we have never met, gave us permission to use certain of their prints.

We are indebted to Dr G. Granville Buckley, F.S.A., for numbers 28.1; 46.1; 47.2; 48.2; 62.1; 81.1; 82.1; 84.2; 122.2; 177.1; 180.1; 186.2; 187.2; 221.2; 224.1; 249.1, 2; 252.2; 264.1; 266.2; 286.1, 2; 287.1; 292.2; 314.1, 3; 318.2; 320; 330.3; 332.1, 2; 348.2, 3. Mr G. C. Druce, F.S.A., 62.2, 3, 4; 67.1; 70.1; 79.3; 122.2; 188.3; 190.1; 207.1, 3; 209.2, 3; 348.1. Mr W. Maitland, 11.2; 32.2; 72; 174.1; 176.1, 3; 222.1; 334.1, 3; 337.2; 340.1; 351.2. Mr John East, 110.1; 130.1; 183; 47.1. Mr Geoffrey Webb, 31.1; 84.1; 313.3. Dr A. C. Fryer, F.S.A., 359.1, 2. Mr G. H. Tyndall, 196. Mr W. Bell-Jones, 176.2. Mr P. Mainwaring Johnston, F.S.A., 145.2. The late W. Galsworthy Davie, 70.2; 85.1. The Rev. T. Romans, 291.2. The late C. F. Nunneley, 207.2. The Director, Victoria County Histories, 273.1. Also to Messrs F. Frith & Co., 34; 269.2. Mr D. Weller, 144.2; 352. Mr F. R. P. Sumner, 133.2; 145.1; 193.2. Mr J. Gale, 71.2. Mr S. Smith, 130.2. Mr C. C. Hodges, per Mr Gibson, 349.2. Mr Geo. Hepworth, 143. Mr A. E. Walsham, 11.1. Mr Montague Cooper, 2.2. Mr Wm. M. Dodson, 38. The Victoria and Albert Museum, 24; 59. Mr Sydney A. Pitcher, 247. Mr F. E. Howard has contributed 12.1, 2; 28.2; 60.1; 68.2; 69.2; 83.2; 110.2; 119.2; 122.1; 126.2; 128.1, 2; 190.3; 208.2; 249.4; 253; 265.1; 266.1, 3; 273.2; 287.2; 329.2; 349.1. The remainder are from the negatives of Mr Fred. H. Crossley. The majority of the drawings are by Mr F. E. Howard, but in cases where subjects are contributed by other draughtsmen their names will usually be found attached to the respective illustrations.

F. H. C.
F E. H.

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NOTES ON THE COLLOTYPE PLATES

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RIPON QUIRE LOOKING WEST - - - - - - 6

These stalls, dating 1490, form an important link in the series of pinnacled stallwork developed in the North of England, of which the earliest is Lincoln 1370, and the last Beverley 1522.

BRADNINCH, DEVON, LOOKING WEST - - - 16

A typical example of Devonshire screenwork stretching across the entire breadth of the building, independent of the arcades. It is late fifteenth century, and has lost its gallery.

WESTMINSTER ABBEY, STALLWORK IN THE CHAPEL OF HENRY VII. - - - - - - - 18

This example, dated 1509, together with the stallwork in St George's Chapel, illustrates the foreign influence in design which was leavening English work from the beginning of the sixteenth century.

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Another example of the influence of foreign design upon the work of the English craftsmen during the early part of the sixteenth century.

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The first of the series of Northern pinnacled canopies dating 1370, followed by Chester 1380, Nantwich 1390.

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A noble rebuilding of a parish church during the early sixteenth century, including the rood-screen, subsidiary screens, and benching.

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A church constructed of timber in a county where timber was plentiful and good building stone scarce. Date, early sixteenth century.

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The finest example of the later type of northern stallwork dated 1508, it is the connecting link between Ripon 1490 and Beverley 1522.

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This bench-end dated 1380 is cut out of a single block of oak and depicts the Stem of Jesse together with the Coronation of the Virgin.

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Late fifteenth or early sixteenth century screen, showing in its details a knowledge of the fashionable forms of the moment.

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Fourteenth-century screen dividing the chapel from the hospital.

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Screen before the Lady Chapel erected about 1524, it retains its gallery front.

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An excellent example of late fifteenth-century East Anglian benching found in profusion in the churches of Norfolk and Suffolk.

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Late fifteenth or early sixteenth century work. This example should be compared with Halifax, Well, and Almondbury, in the same county, and with the three surviving examples in Newcastle-on-Tyne.

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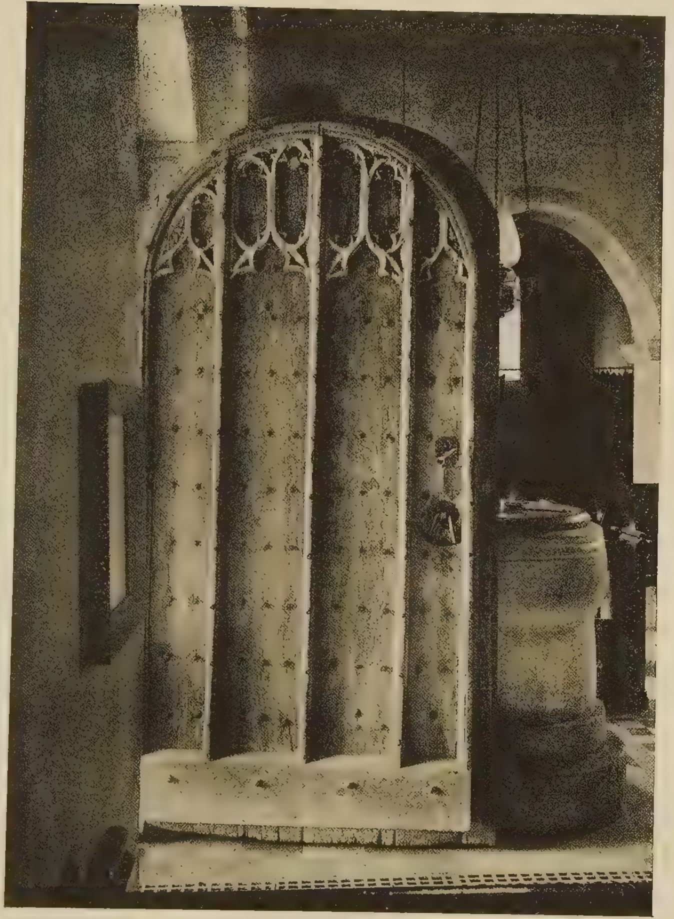
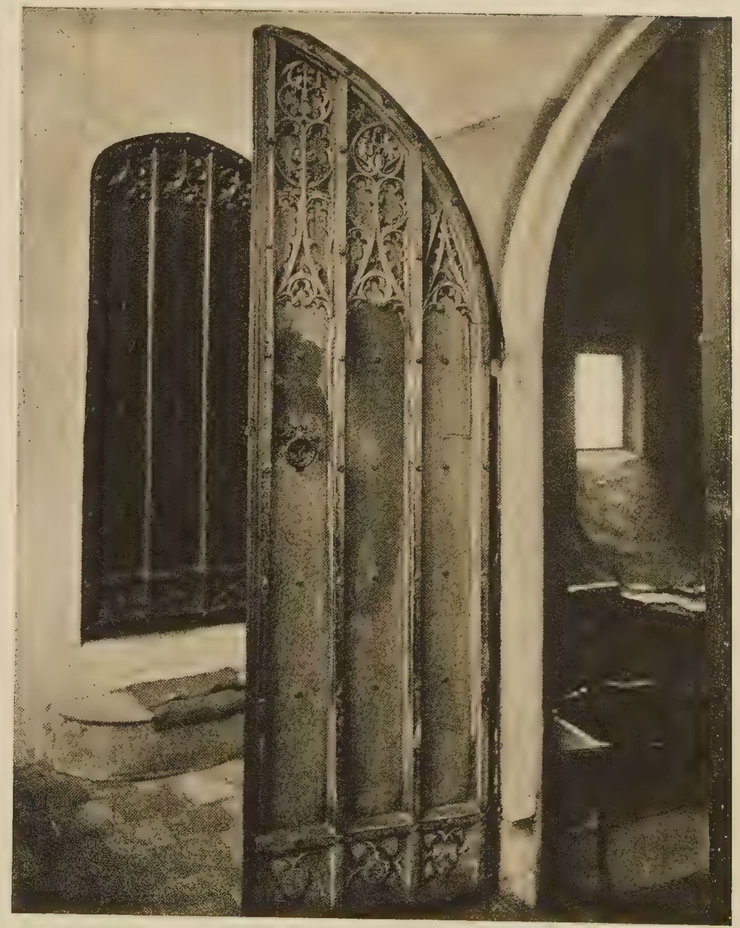
EARLY AND LATE FIFTEENTH-CENTURY DESIGN COMPARED



STRATTON-ON-THE-FOSSE, SOMERSET



NORWICH ST LAWRENCE, NORFOLK

ENGLISH CHURCH WOODWORK

I

INTRODUCTION

The mediæval woodwork of England is one of the most magnificent legacies of our forefathers. It is extraordinarily difficult to realise that our race, now enthralled in the wonders of mechanical science, and one of the least artistic in the world, was once equally devoted to the delights of beautiful craftsmanship. Yet this is the case. The Middle Ages, and above all the fifteenth century, produced in vast quantities the most wonderful woodwork the world has ever seen; and that of England, though its superiority or inferiority to that of the Continent is a matter for dispute, is of the greatest importance. It has been particularly fortunate in escaping destruction, though it is pitiful to reflect that not more than a tenth part of the lovely church fittings of pre-Reformation days remains for our admiration, and that much of this work has suffered so grievously from time, neglect, and mutilation as to be almost unrecognisable by its designers. Of the hundreds of fine reredoses which are known from documents to have once existed, only a few scanty and unimportant fragments remain; while rood-lofts, once the most magnificent adornment of every parish church, are now so rare that when, by exception, one has survived, latter-day antiquaries have been at the pains of inventing absurd legends to the effect that these purely parochial ornaments of the church have been brought from an abbey at the Dissolution.

In the face of this widespread destruction it is marvellous that so much is left for the delight of those who care to seek for it, not only in those well-known architectural districts, the west country and East Anglia, but in practically every county. There are few parts of the country which do not possess interesting and beautiful local types of mediæval woodwork. The lovely group of timber porches in the south-eastern counties (62-67), the grand roofs of Cheshire (113, 114), the stately screens of Yorkshire (223, 257), are instances, and the enthusiastic student will find similar remains of beautiful and strongly constructed woodwork almost everywhere.

Nevertheless, until recent years it has passed almost unnoticed. The astounding richness of the Devonshire churches in elaborately carved woodwork appears to be known to comparatively few. Vast numbers of visitors see the magnificent screen at Dartmouth, but they are left with the impression that it is an isolated phenomenon, or a relic of some monastery, whereas, beautiful as it is, practically every west country church once had a screen rivalling, or even surpassing it in beauty, and several hundred still retain one. Again, thousands of visitors to the East Coast are entirely unaware that they are in a district where scores of fine churches are still glorious with mediæval carving and painting, and that this work is one of the highest achievements in art that the English race has attained. In Wales the churches are humble, and certainly not calculated to catch the eye of the tourist. They are indeed utterly insignificant amid their solemn surroundings of great hills. Very few visitors ever enter them, but, if by chance they do so, they cannot fail to be impressed with the skill and devotion of those mediæval wood-carvers who could make even these mean structures glorious with rood-lofts such as those of Llananno (42), or Llanrwst (270).

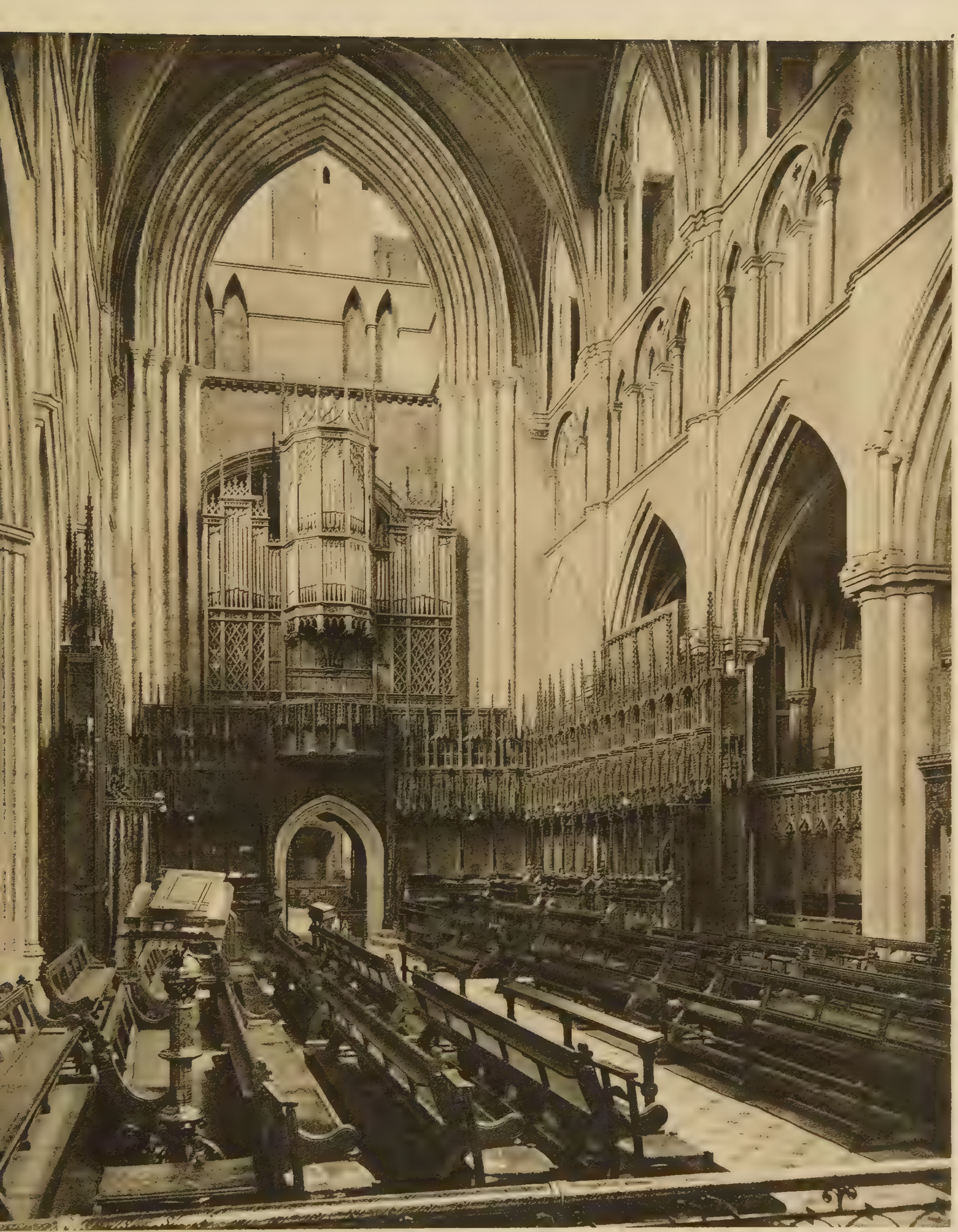
It cannot be too strongly emphasised that fine woodwork, though now found in comparatively few churches, was once possessed by all. Every church had its pews, its rood-loft, its font-cover; and there is no reason to suppose that those which have survived have escaped destruction because of their exceptional beauty. Indeed the reverse is far more likely.

What is the secret of the charm of mediæval woodwork? In the first place, the ancient craftsmen were gifted with an eye for proportion and a sense of scale which can only be properly appreciated by comparing a work of the Middle Ages with some effort of a modern craftsman, whose artistic senses are blunted by the countless hideous things he sees daily, while his brain is jaded with the conflicting teaching of dozens of false prophets. In the second place, the elements with which they had to deal—shafts, pinnacles, tracery, canopies, trails, and crestings—were exceedingly beautiful in themselves. No one but a modern genius could fail to combine them into harmonious compositions. Then again the methods of the mediæval craftsman were so human, so full of energy, so devoid of effort. Never having seen the results of slave or machine labour, he had no desire to emulate it. Minute accuracy and exact symmetry were not esteemed as virtues, nor was smoothness and regularity of surface regarded as an end in itself. If one cares to examine a bit of mediæval tracery, one will generally find the remains of the setting out lines deeply scored into the wood, and a glimpse will be obtained into the actual processes employed. The carving is a true product of the chisel and the gouge, not a reproduction in wood of a clay original model.

Though the wood-worker of the fifteenth century appreciated the value of repetition, and was aware of the rich effects which can be produced by the reduplication of the same element, his duplicates are scarcely ever exact. Here he has run against a bad knot, around which the moulding is made to curve; there his tool has slipped, and he has been obliged to modify the design to hide the defect. When variety is the motive of the design, as in some of the Welsh rood-lofts (268, 269), or the later bench-ends of Somerset (316, 317), or Suffolk (314, 315), the fertility of the design is astonishing. The effect is very rarely restless or incongruous, nor does it leave the impression that the craftsman is trying to make a display of his skill. Though figure sculpture was not a strong point of the English wood-worker, he excelled in the comic element, without which much mediæval carving would be almost too pretty. The value of the grotesque can only be appreciated fully when one contemplates examples of

Victorian restorations in which mediæval grotesques, thought by those supersensitive souls to be too coarse for a place of worship, have been superseded by innocuous angels. There is no contrast, and just as it appears to take good and bad men to make a world, so the beautiful and the grotesque must be combined to produce woodwork with the charm of that of the Middle Ages. Not that mediæval grotesques symbolise evil. Many of them are the most engaging beasties and devils, possessing in a high degree the beauty of extreme ugliness, while many of the most hideous were employed to teach the most moral stories.

It is a matter for great thankfulness that the passion for the destruction of mediæval woodwork has abated within the last few years, a result largely due to the reawakening interest on the part of the public, educated by the numerous well-illustrated books on the subject which have lately made their appearance. Nowadays a screen or a font-cover cannot disappear without a hue and cry being raised, and considerable unenviable publicity. A few years ago many splendid examples of mediæval art in out-of-the-way places were absolutely at the mercy of the local authorities, often ignorant and fanatical; now, with the aid of the cycle and motor, they can be kept under surveillance by ardent antiquaries. The great danger is that of over-restoration, which has already deprived many gems of mediæval art of their interest and authenticity. But there is a lesser danger, one which has already wrought untold damage. Periodically at the great festivals of the Church, and more particularly at that still more popular festival, the Harvest Thanksgiving, the most exquisitely wrought ornaments of the church are shrouded and hidden by trails of untidy greenery, or absurdly adorned with vegetables. Could anything be more ridiculous than this attempted "decoration" of that which is already supremely decorative? But there is cause here for tears as well as laughter, for this greenery cannot be artistically disposed without the aid of stout nails, driven into the old oak, while sharp wires or dirty wisps of string are often left permanently clinging to the screen ready for the next festival. On every hidden ledge, above all, on the top of the screen, or in the upper niches of the font-cover, there



RIPON QUIRE LOOKING WEST, STALLWORK, 1490.

may be found lumps of decaying moss or dead ivy leaves, attracting all kinds of filth and setting up decay. The clergy are gradually awaking to the mischievousness of these orgies of floral decoration, but it is difficult to reach or to influence their lady parishioners. In time, perhaps, even they will realise that every fragment of mediæval art is irreplaceable and precious, and that until we are capable of producing better work (and this is unlikely to happen for many years) it is our duty to do all we can to pass it on intact to the next generation, who may be better able than we to understand its excellence.

Under normal conditions it was inevitable that the art of woodworking should flourish during the later Middle Ages, but while some districts are very rich in mediæval woodwork, in others it has been almost entirely destroyed in the various social and religious disturbances which have arisen since the Reformation. It may also be noted that in some parts of the country the woodwork reaches a very high level of design, while in others it is somewhat mediocre.

There was great enthusiasm for religion among all classes, particularly among those of comparatively humble birth, for the horrors of the Black Death of 1349 had driven them to seek consolation in the ministrations of the Church. Beauty and religion were inseparable to the mind of the mediæval Englishman, whose way of showing his love towards God was to worship Him with beautiful ceremonies in beautiful places. Money was plentiful, partly because of the enterprise and industry of the Englishman of that date, particularly in all the branches of the wool trade, and partly because of the simplicity of the wants of the average citizen. The standard of comfort was not high, sumptuary laws prevented much needless extravagance, and expensive sports had not yet been invented. The churchman, therefore, had both the will and the means to provide good woodwork for his parish church, in which he took a great delight. He would even have done so had the work been costly, which it was not. Timber was very plentiful and good in almost all districts, and the methods of the mediæval craftsman were conducive to cheapness. He hated tiring, time-wasting labour, and mechanical perfection of finish was unknown to him ; he studied how he could obtain the most delightful effect with the minimum of trouble. The usually accepted idea that in these far-off days the wood-carver took infinite care and pains over his work, while the modern worker is slapdash and inclined to jerry-build, is absolutely at variance with the facts. The mediæval worker always had an eye to the general effect, and cared very little for open joints, twisted timbers, irregular setting out, and rough surface, provided the complete work was strong in construction and beautiful in design. The average modern craftsman, working blindly from the design of the architect, gives his whole mind to producing a perfect regularity both of setting out and surface. His curves are perfect segments of circles, and his mitres are worked with meticulous care. He wastes hours in minute corrections and adjustments, and in tedious rubbing down with sandpaper. For these reasons, in spite of the greater efficiency of modern tools, which should make for greater rapidity and cheapness of production, woodwork was much cheaper in the Middle Ages than at the present day.

Besides all this, there was a healthy state of competition. Parishes vied with one another as to who should make their church the most beautiful, while between craftsman and craftsman the competition must have been strenuous, and certainly tended to raise the standard of design. Difficulties of communication rendered the employment of local workmen very advantageous, and as a consequence the parishioners took a far greater interest in the work, which they could see growing in the wood-carver's shop, in their own village, or in the market town, than if it had suddenly arrived in the church from some far-off manufactory.

And if mediæval woodwork is remarkable for its quantity, it is even more notable for its quality. The general high level of design may be attributed to the system of apprenticeship, by which the apprentice learnt all that the master knew, and was taught to improve upon and develop his knowledge, not to be original or to branch off on his own account upon new and profitless experiments. Nor was he hampered and confused like the modern craftsmen by a slight knowledge of all the architectural styles of all periods and countries. He knew no art save that of his own land and that of his own immediate ancestors, and cared for none but that of his contemporaries. This simplicity of aim was lost in the sixteenth century, owing to the influx of foreign craftsmen with different traditions, and to the changes of the Renaissance, and it can never be recovered.

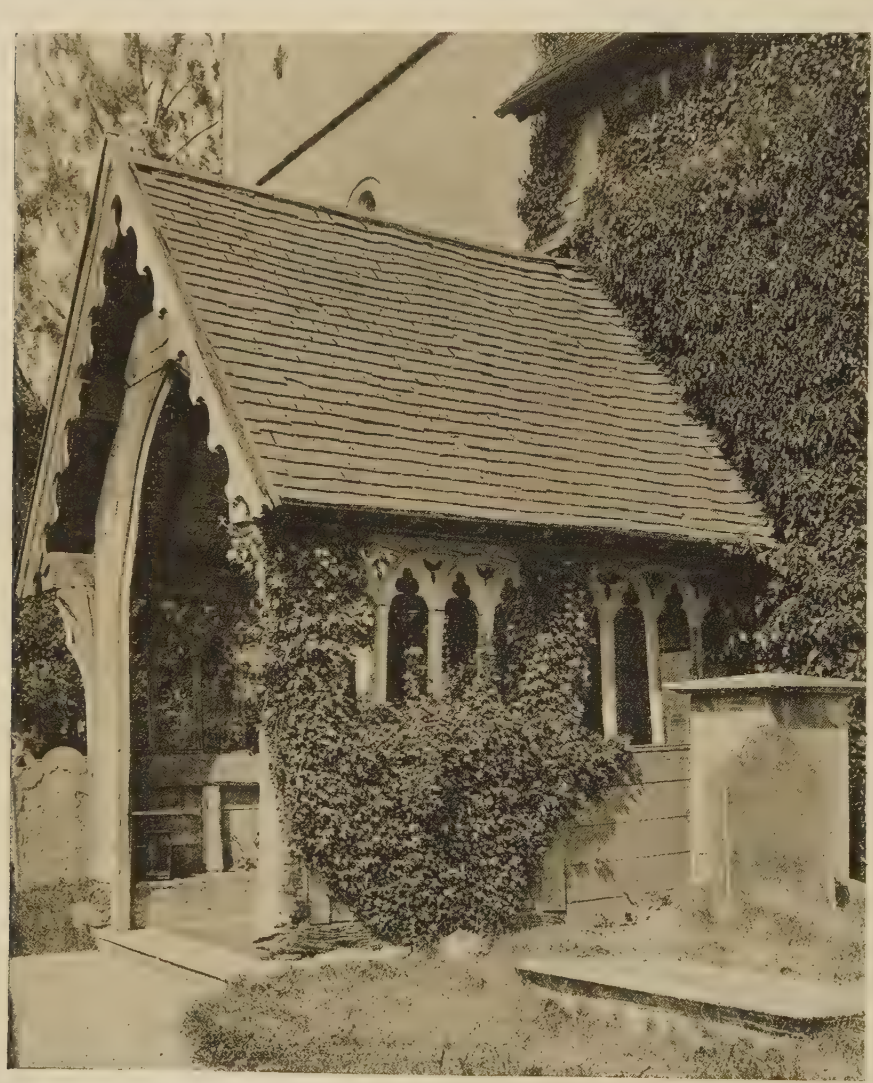
It is probable, then, that woodwork would have flourished equally strongly in every part of the country but for various adverse influences. In some counties there were important manufactories of tombs and effigies. In the Midlands these were freely patronised, and the competition of the tomb maker adversely affected the wood-worker. The best woodwork counties are generally poor in monumental remains, while those where the tomb makers flourished are comparatively weak in woodwork. In Somerset, where wood-working reached a very high level indeed, still better work would have been done if so great a proportion of the wealth of the county had not been devoted to the abnormal development of the tower.

Some counties, particularly those in the extreme north, had no natural advantages in wealth or materials. They were poor in soil and their populations were small; they were constantly subject to raids and invasion. It is not surprising that Cumberland, Westmorland, Northumberland, and Durham are about the poorest counties in England for mediæval woodwork. Indeed, the wonder is that what they do possess is so good and refined in design. Wales presents a very interesting problem. Although possessing few natural resources, and at no time particularly prosperous, it produced much work which surpasses that of many of the wealthy English counties.

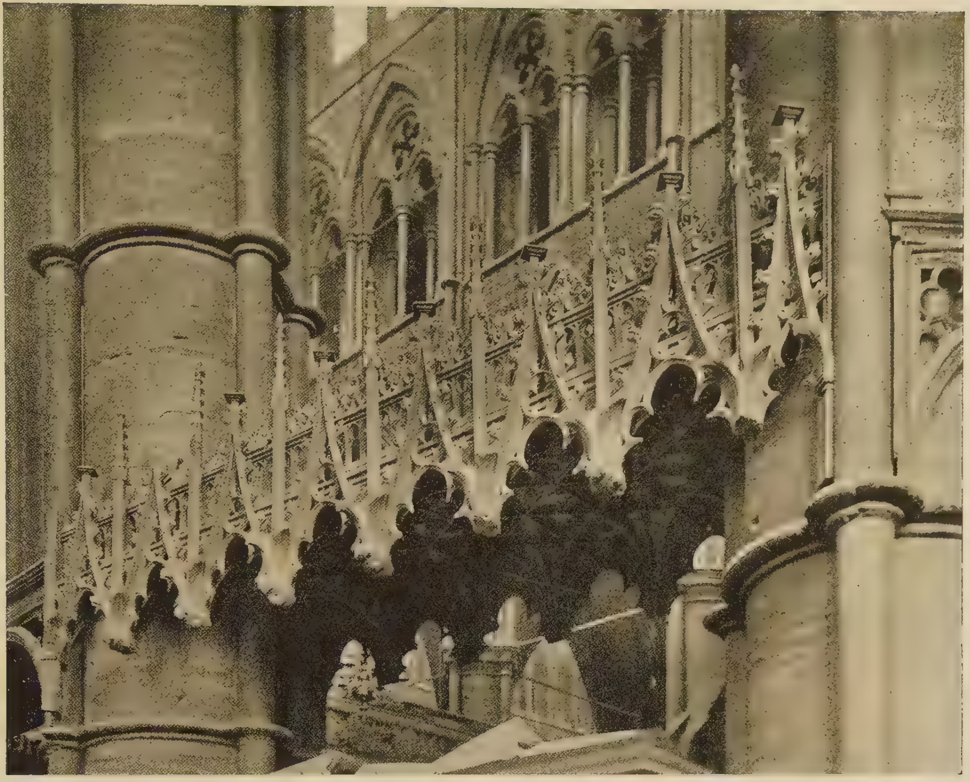
The evil effects of war and rebellion probably account for the comparative unimportance of the woodwork of the Midland and Home counties. These were most affected by the various popular risings of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries, and by the long Wars of the Roses, though the latter were waged with comparative humanity with very small forces, and appear to have interfered with the crafts very little. The churches were generally spared, and when, by exception, they were destroyed, as at Stamford, they were rebuilt on the conclusion of peace, far more beautifully than before, with splendid woodwork, judging from what has escaped the iconoclasts.

But the Home counties were perpetually undergoing political disturbances and uprisings, and in this country politics and the arts cannot flourish side by side.

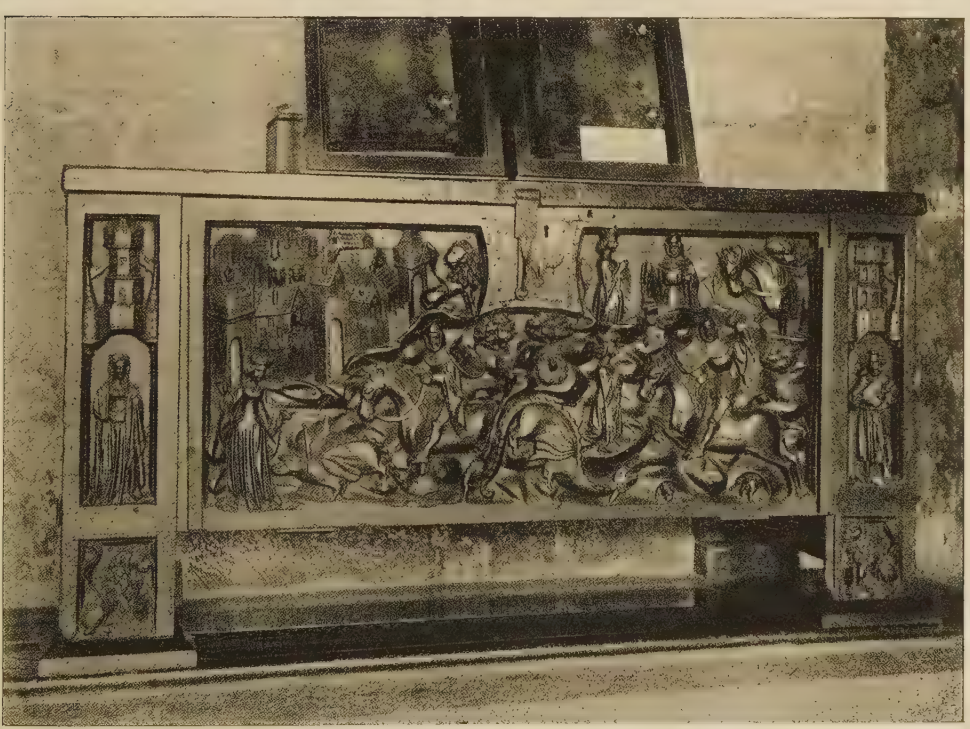
The precise effects of pestilence upon mediæval crafts has only just begun to be recognised and studied. It may be that the comparative freedom of the maritime counties from the terrible epidemics which broke out from time to time, as compared with the severity of the outbreaks in the Midlands, may account for the excellence of most of the counties on the sea coast from the point of view of wood-working.



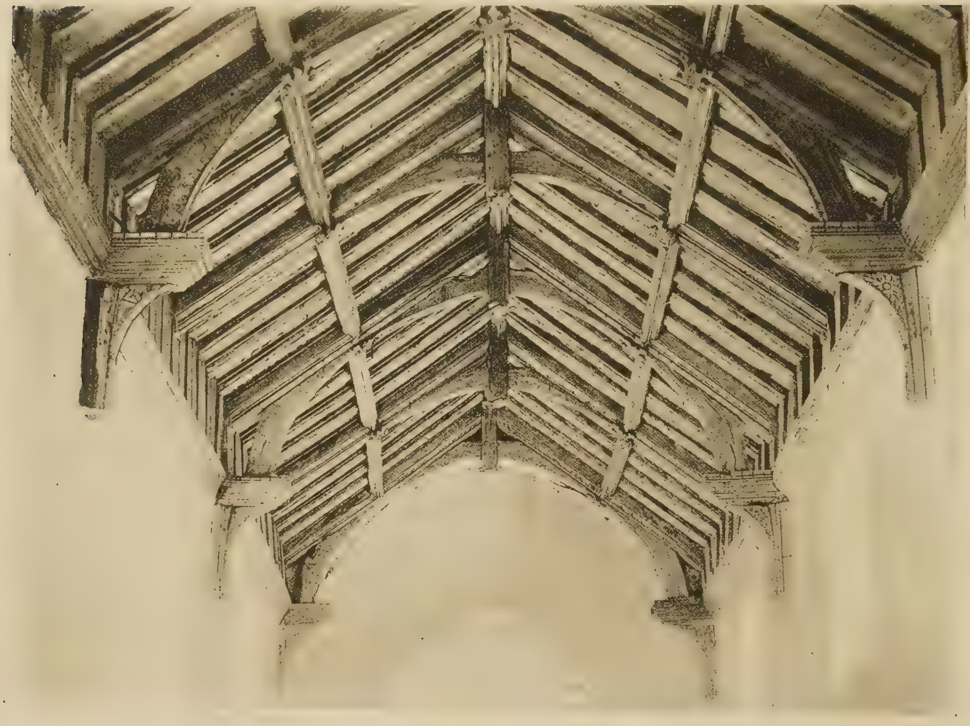
ST MICHAEL, MUNSLOW, SALOP, SOUTH PORCH



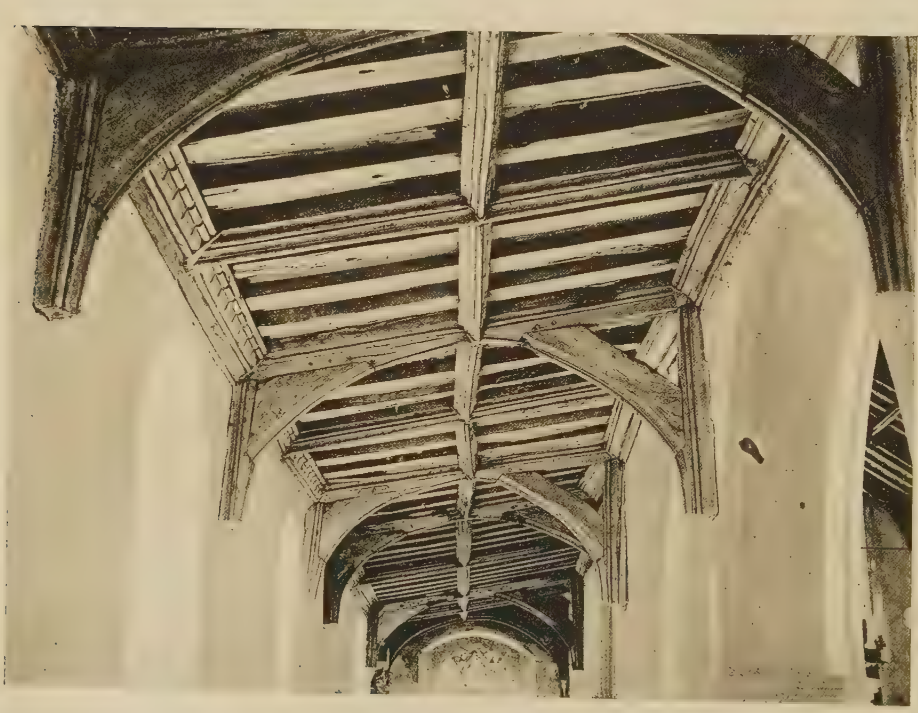
WESTMINSTER ABBEY, TESTER TO TOMB OF EDWARD III



YORK MINSTER, CHEST



SOUTHACRE, NORFOLK, HAMMER-BEAM ROOF OF NAVE



SOUTHACRE, NORFOLK, FLYING BUTTRESS ROOF OF AISLE

THE RISE AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE CRAFT OF WOOD-WORKING

England produced scarcely any woodwork of artistic importance until the latter part of the thirteenth century. All the ablest designers and workers appear to have been engaged in masonry, which dominated all the other crafts at this period, with the exception of that of the smith. Such meagre fragments of twelfth and early thirteenth century woodwork as remain are of primitive and rather illogical construction, and possess very little beauty of proportion or charm of detail. It is obvious that the craftsmen in wood had not yet appreciated the qualities and possibilities of wood as a medium of artistic expression, for they drew their ideas, both of design and construction, directly from stonework.

For instance, until the second half of the thirteenth century the generally accepted method of making a chest was to hew it, with infinite labour and great waste of material, from the solid trunk of a tree, just as the stone coffins of the period were cut from a single block of stone. Similarly, a chest tomb was built up of great slabs of oak in the manner of the mason, while the openings in the framework of screens were filled in with arcades, of which the various members were dowelled together like stonework, instead of being properly framed together with mortice and tenon joints.

Again, if we examine such well-known examples of early woodwork as the wooden railing at Compton, Surrey; the desks at Rochester; the reredos at Adisham, Kent; the tombs at Salisbury and Pitchford, Salop (358); and the screens at Thurcaston, Leicestershire; Gilston, Herts.; and Stanton Harcourt, Oxon., we find that in every instance the only motive of the decoration is the arcade, taken directly from stonework. It is true that the proportions of the parts are slightly modified; the members are more slender and the mouldings are more delicate; but the fact remains that the wood-worker was regarding his material as an inferior substitute for stone, and was copying the work of the mason as closely as his material would admit; indeed he probably hoped that when coloured his work would pass for stone.

Other branches of wood-working were taken over by the smith. For instance, all the early doors and a large and important group of chests consisted only of plain oak boards, fixed together with wrought-iron nails, and almost entirely covered with elaborate straps and hinges of iron scrollwork. These are, perhaps, the most striking examples that can be given to show the humble position of the wood-worker in the early days of Gothic art.

A certain community of motive between the mason and the carpenter is very desirable from the artistic point of view, but it is inexpedient to translate forms so directly from one material to the other, for the natures of stone and wood are entirely different. Stone is of granular structure, and must be dealt with in more or less cubical blocks, while wood is fibrous, and is best when employed in long and comparatively slender pieces, or in thin boards. If stone were used in such thin and delicate pieces it would inevitably fracture, while if wood were used in great cubical blocks it would be certain to shrink, twist, and crack, owing to the imperfect seasoning of the heart. Again, stone is very heavy, and the various parts of a masonry structure remain in position by their own weight, assisted by dowels to prevent one block sliding upon the other. On the other hand, wood is so light that the different members must be framed together with mortice and tenon joints, and pegged to prevent displacement.

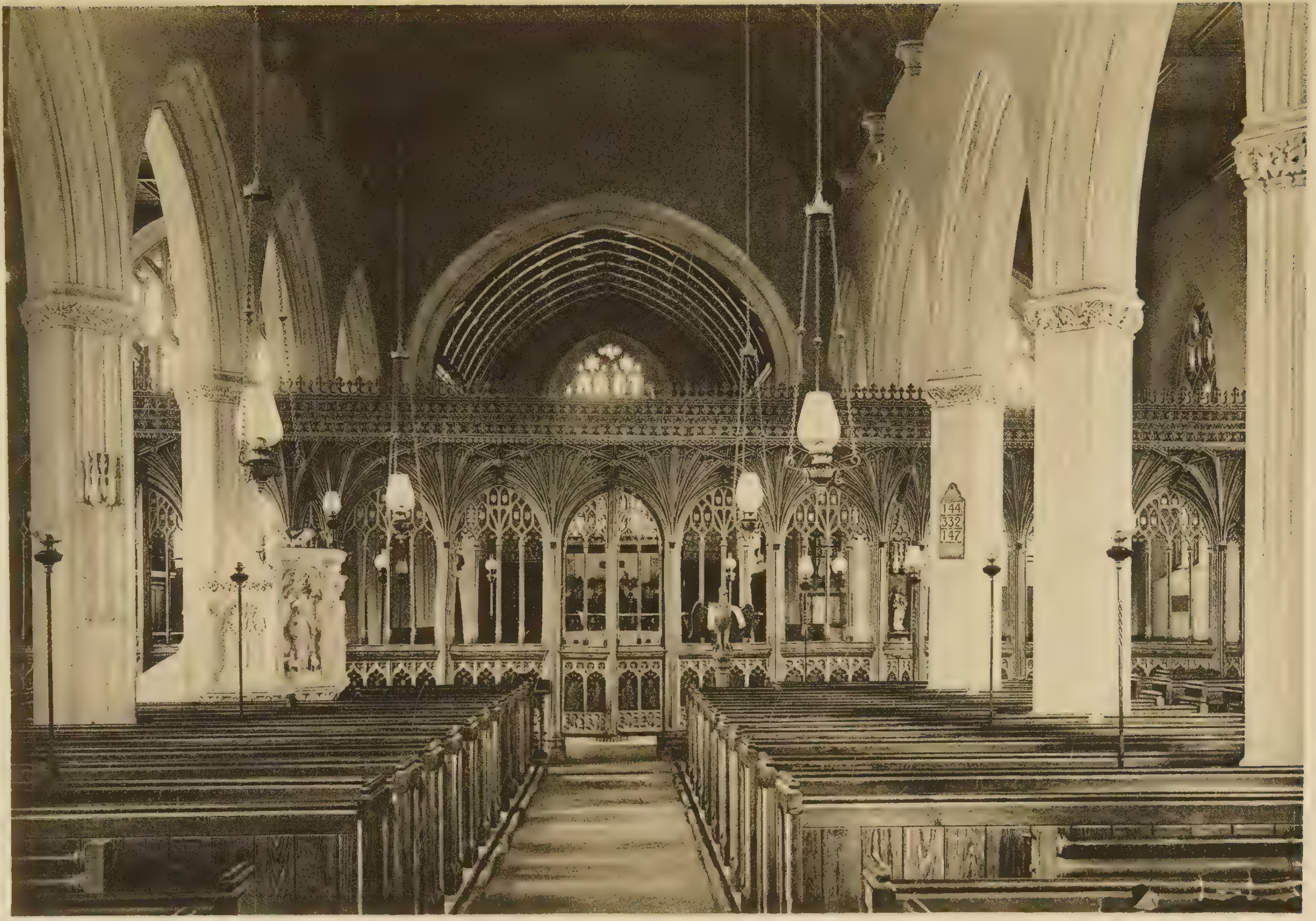
No great progress was possible while the carpenter clung to the constructional methods of the mason and the smith, and depended so entirely on the decorative motives of stonework. But thirteenth-century woodwork is not without its beauties. The delicacy and refinement of the mouldings, particularly those of the turned shafts, and the boldness and vigour of the foliage carving, when it occurs, are very striking. The misericords of Exeter and Hemingborough, Yorks. (188), have vigorous foliage and figure work of this period, and there are one or two examples among the series at Christchurch, Hants, and Henry the Seventh's chapel at Westminster. The design is somewhat incoherent, and the various motives give one the impression that they are applied haphazard to the little brackets. They were probably cut by stone masons, and it is easy to see how delighted they were to find that wood would bear undercutting to an extent almost impossible in stone, but it is evident that they did not yet appreciate its fibrous nature.

The earliest English woodwork of real importance in the history of art is the stallwork of the quire of Winchester cathedral church (151), which dates from the latter part of the thirteenth century, and exhibits all the great faults and excellences of the period. The design of the canopies appears to have been borrowed directly from such canopied tombs as that of Bishop Acquablanca at Hereford. The tall traceried gables and slender turned shafts are built up in the mason's manner, and the cutting of the elaborately moulded tracery of rigidly geometrical pattern must have entailed great and monotonous labour, which is hardly justified by the general effect, though these stalls are wonderfully dignified. The detail of the carving, however, is splendid. The foliage is of several different types, some of pronounced Early English style, some rather advanced and of naturalistic design. It is remarkable for its bold cutting and perfection of modelling.

These stall canopies afford one of the first instances of the employment of tracery in woodwork. It was an invention of the mason, but happened to suit wood even better than stone. The wood-carvers soon found that finer results could be obtained in their own material, with far less labour. The arcade as a motive of decoration gave place to bands of tracery, which as yet were supported on turned shafts (25). At first the tracery was cut out of a thick plank, and was elaborately moulded, but it was soon found that an equally good effect could be obtained with less intricate mouldings, while the tracery itself amply repaid the time spent in elaborating its lines. This naturally led to the reduction of the thickness of the tracery, since an elaborate design meant many piercings, and it is less laborious to pierce a thin than a thick board. Towards the close of the fourteenth century the mechanical and tedious part of the work was practically eliminated, and the carver was free to devote his chief attention to the design.

The abandonment of stiff-stalked foliage, essentially a stone motive, in favour of natural forms, which took place at this period, also tended to encourage the wood-carver. The natural foliage was far better suited to the nature of wood, and was particularly inspiring to the carvers of misericords. There are several lovely sets, but that at Wells (188) is much the finest. These are remarkable for their well-ordered design, their reasonable undercutting, and the extraordinary fineness of their modelling. The figure work is full of grace and action. Natural foliage is rare, except in misericords and stall elbows.

By the second decade of the fourteenth century the masons discontinued the use of geometrical tracery and natural foliage, and began to employ curvilinear tracery, in conjunction with a more conventional bulbous leafage. The wood-workers naturally followed suit, and again the change of fashion, started by the mason for his own purposes, proved to be a real source of inspiration to the wood-worker, by whom it was carried to an extraordinary development. While most parochial woodwork of this period was of little importance, the sedilia of Beverley minster (134, 144), the Bishop's Throne at Exeter (193-95), and the stalls of Lancaster (181), with their bewilderingly elaborate traceries and masterly foliage carving, show what skill the wood-worker had now acquired, and how he could now beat the mason when he cared to try. But all these lovely works are backward as regards construction. The wood-worker was still building up his design in great blocks, slabs and shafts, pinnacles and gables, as if it were stonework, and did not yet understand that it was possible to obtain results of supremely artistic character with the reasonable method of construction with posts and beams, framed together with the mortice and tenon, which he invariably employed in works of a purely utilitarian character, such as roofs. The screens of the Chichester almshouse chapel, King's Lynn St Margaret's (231), and Lavenham, Suffolk, are examples of compromise between the pinnacle and gable design and the more



BRADNINCH, DEVON, LATE 15TH CENTURY WORK.

reasonable method. The pinnacles are framed into a head beam, and thus become members of a rectangular framework.

The admission of framed construction into works of real artistic importance was furthered by the revolution in style which took place about the middle of the fourteenth century. In this, the last and most beautiful phase of Gothic art, horizontal and vertical lines played a very important part in the design, and these suited the fibrous nature of the wood to perfection. The wood-worker rose from one triumph to another, and after the year 1400 the mason was no longer predominant. It was the wood-worker who introduced new ideas and motives, and who influenced the mason, thus completely turning the tables.

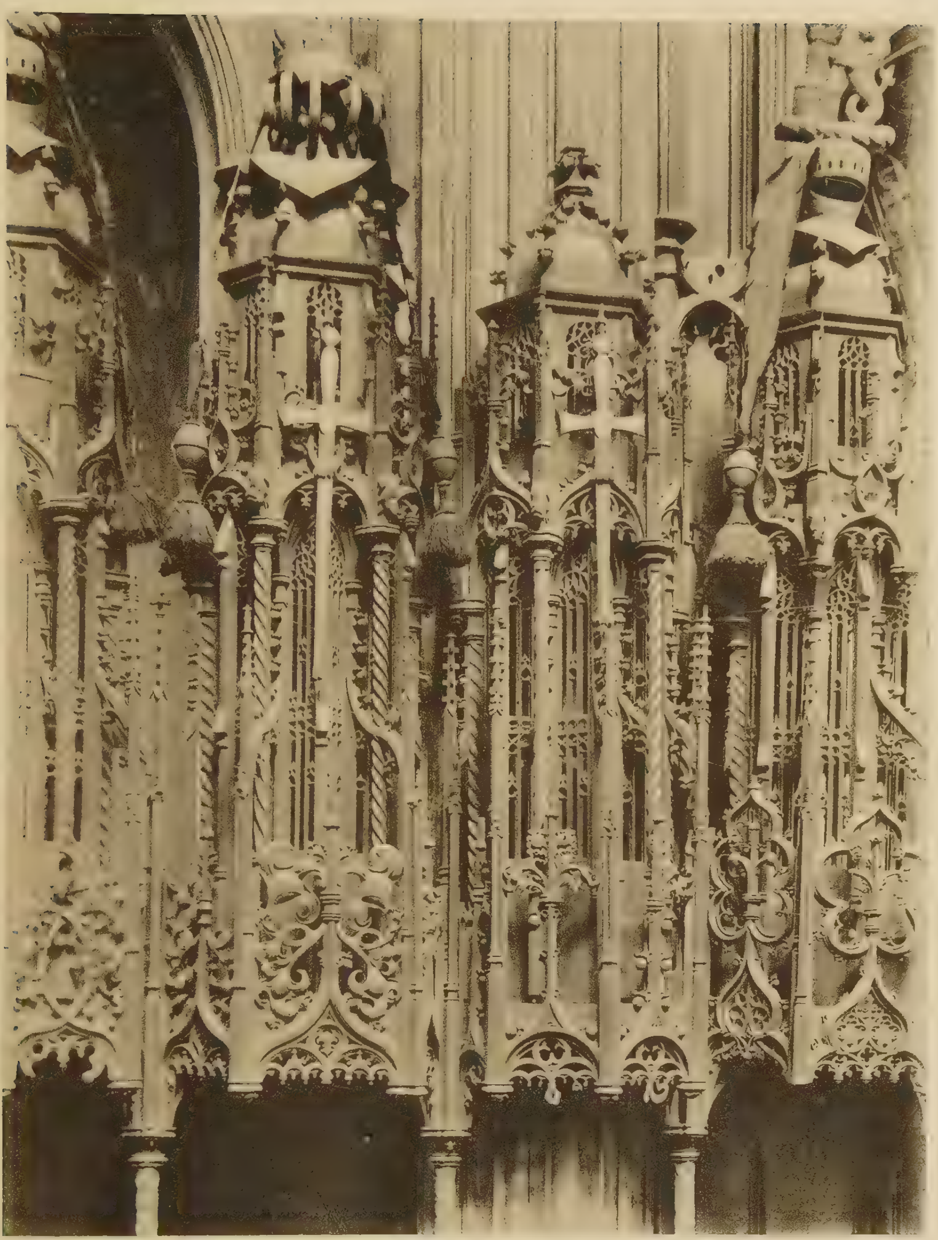
The finest late fourteenth-century woodwork is to be found in the North. The parclose screens of Beverley minster (frontispiece) (rather incoherent as regards construction, but perfect miracles of grace and beauty), and the splendid tabernacled stalls of Lincoln and Chester (165), are the best examples of their date, combining with the fine proportion and delicacy of the new style the wonderful finish and subtlety of modelling which we find in the earlier work.

It is curious to note that while these magnificent works were being carried out in the greater churches, contemporary parochial work did not as yet reach so high a level. Simplicity of line, large timbers, deeply cut mouldings, and severely rectilinear tracery are its main characteristics. The screens of Halberton, Devon, Edlesborough, Bucks., and Leighton Buzzard, Beds., are examples of this phase. In the fifteenth century, however, the woodwork of the parish churches began to challenge comparison with that of the cathedrals and abbeys. All over England it grew to be the custom to provide even the humblest village churches with admirable fittings of oak, particularly in the eastern counties and in the south-west. Most work was lavished upon the screens and font-covers, but the benches, pulpits, stalls, and lecterns of the period were also of excellent design and sensible construction.

While the few really splendid examples of fourteenth-century woodwork can be counted upon the fingers, and the majority are here illustrated, the fifteenth century was responsible for the production of so much magnificent craftsmanship in wood, that ten volumes of this size would scarcely suffice to do it justice.

It was at this time that woodwork first became localised. Hitherto there had been little difference in style between the woodwork of Oxon. and that of York, or between that of Kent and that of Cheshire, but henceforward the wood-workers of different districts developed distinct styles, which tended to become more and more diverse as time went on. This may be partly explained by the fact that until the middle of the fourteenth century the cathedrals had set a standard for the parish churches, and led the way in design, but after this date churchmen appear to have transferred their affections and their alms to the parish churches, and an altogether different state of affairs arose. Instead of the parish church dimly following an unapproachable ideal (which, indeed, it would not have been profitable for it to attain), and falling lamentably short of it, there arose a spirit of friendly competition between one parish and another. Each parish strove to make its church better and more beautiful than that of its neighbour, and to fit it up with more seemly, or even more magnificent furniture. If one parish church was beautified by the erection of a new and finer screen than it had possessed before, the neighbouring parish immediately set about getting a new screen for their own church, inserting in the contract a clause to the effect that the new work was to be like that of the first parish, but better in all respects, for they not only wished to surpass the efforts of the first parish, but to beat them on their own ground. Possibly this lively competition was not very spiritual, but it is to the system of improved copying that the great excellence of fifteenth-century woodwork and the extreme interest of its local styles were chiefly due.

By this time the propriety of framing up most articles of woodwork was frankly recognised. Posts and beams, rails and panels did not pretend to be other than they really were, and their character was charmingly emphasised by ornament. In the fifteenth century this is often cut out of separate thin pieces of wood, and applied to



WESTMINSTER ABBEY, STALLWORK IN HENRY VII'S CHAPEL, DATE 1509.

Photo. Walsham.

the framing. This application of delicate ornamentation to a sturdy main structure is very characteristic. Instances are the tabernacle work of the stall and font canopies, and of the rood-loft fronts. These are often composed of hundreds of delicate pinnacles, archlets, flying buttresses, and traceried panels applied to the strong main framework (frontispiece). There is a wide distinction between this building up of secondary features and the building up of the main structure, which was the rule in the early woodwork. The former is a process which is extremely suitable to the material, and the liveliness of effect and depth of shadow justifies the fragility of the work. Of course, much of this flimsy work has disappeared in the course of four or five hundred years of brutal misusage and neglect, but the wonder is rather that the work has proved to be so enduring.

In addition to their pre-eminence in the making of furniture and church fittings generally, the wood-workers of the fifteenth century also won great triumphs in structural woodwork, particularly in roof building. The main constructional difficulties had been solved long before in the thirteenth century, or perhaps even earlier, but the problem of turning the roof into a fitting crown for their churches yet remained unsolved. In the fourteenth century there was some attempt at the beautifying of the constructional timbers of a roof on rather misdirected lines. The arched members were sometimes elaborately moulded, and the other members of the principals were often cusped, as at Adderbury (28), with a rather heavy effect, and clumsy figure sculpture is employed at Whissendine (28). The fifteenth-century roof carpenters improved the construction by a clever use of wall posts, reducing the thrust considerably; and by making the arched braces thinner and deeper, filling the spandrels with thin and delicate tracery, they produced an effect of lightness and grace absolutely unknown in the earlier work. The magnificent roof of Badingham (29) shows the fifteenth-century carpenters at their best. They were the first to attempt the decorative treatment of the roof surface, by means of which very beautiful results were obtained. The successful combination of the roofs of aisle and clerestory into an organic structure was also due to the genius of the fifteenth-century carpenters.

They also excelled in the design of the rood-lofts, which came into general use in parish churches at the end of the fifteenth century; of these Flamborough (223) is typical. In spite of organised destruction, examples remain to show how well the mediæval woodworkers could solve the difficult problem of poising upon a light screen a strong and serviceable gallery that was often capable of carrying singers, an organ, and sometimes an altar. In many cases the design of the screen and the loft were connected by the use of wooden vaulting, a translation from stone building, but one which it is unreasonable to condemn on constructional grounds, for though stone vaults are of earlier origin, it is much easier to build vaults in wood than in stone. Wood vaulting was also employed in a few roof cornices with admirable results, as at Framlingham (119).

Beautiful wood vaults were built on a large scale at Winchester and St David's Tower in the fifteenth century, and were it not that most vaults are of stone, it would not have occurred to anyone to abuse them as unconstructional.

It is difficult to understand why so many hard things have been said of fifteenth-century carving. One reads of its conventionality, of its squareness and angularity, of its shallow cutting and monotonous regularity. These faults exist only in the imagination of nineteenth-century archæologists, and are sufficiently refuted by the examples here illustrated. It is true that the wonderful subtlety of modelling, which marks the work of the fourteenth century, is no longer found, though the vine trails of the south-west do not fall far short of this. Instead we find a certain impressionism, and an extraordinary sense of calculating for distant effects, as in the tabernacle work at Beverley (frontispiece). Looked at leaf by leaf the fourteenth-century work may be finer, but in general effect and in the proportion and distribution of the ornament the fifteenth-century work is incomparably more beautiful. Very little fourteenth-century work outside the cathedral and abbey churches is fit to compare with the glorious trails of the western art of the fifteenth century, which may still be seen in many little parish churches, even in the most humble.

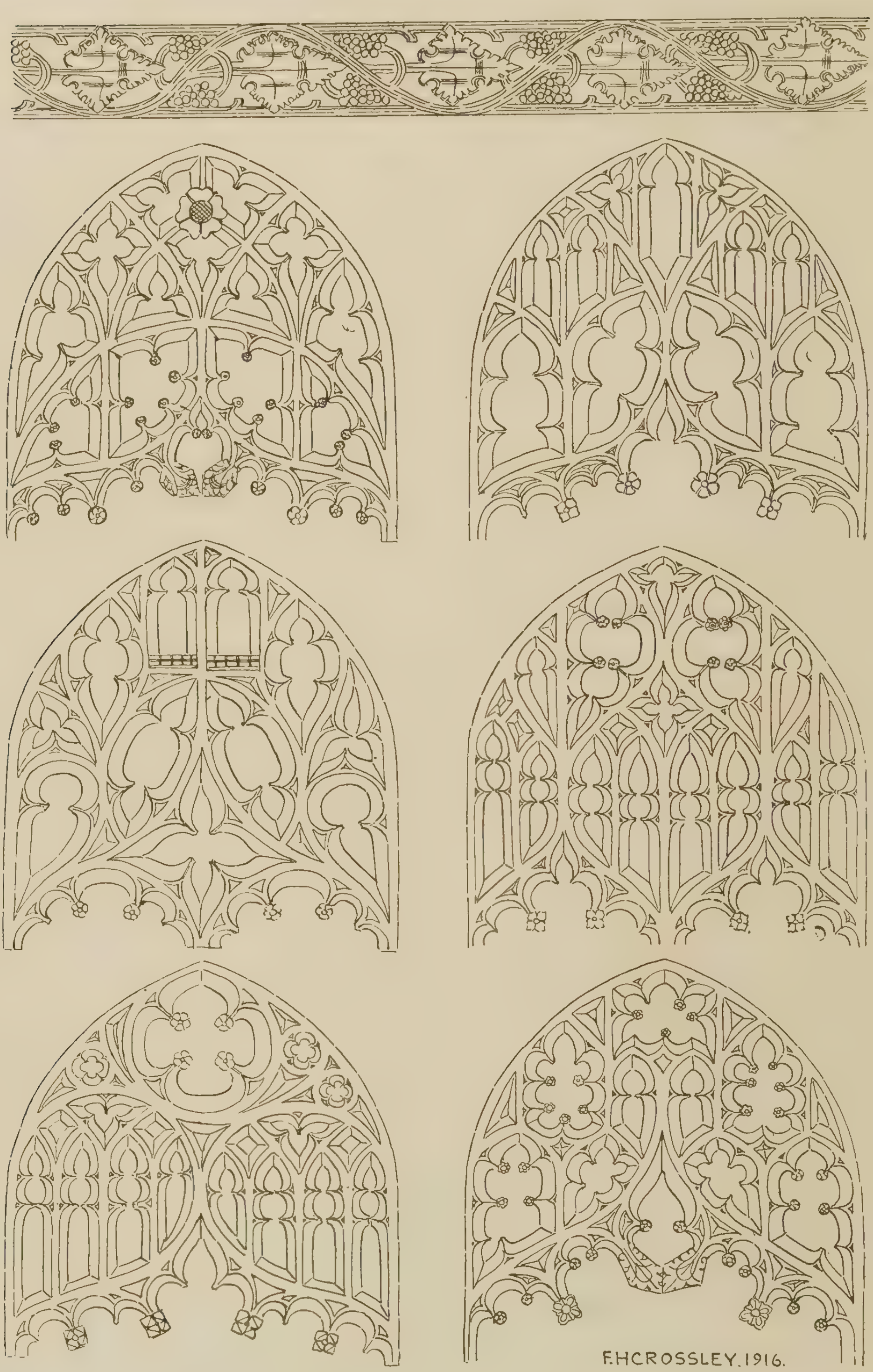
The motives of the decoration are also more human and interesting. Heraldry, very rarely found in woodwork of the fourteenth century, though so freely employed by the other crafts, was given a more prominent position, and was treated with a charming freedom. The carving of helms with crest, mantling, and supporters afforded a splendid opportunity to the carver, as in the bench at Monkleigh (33), and he also delighted in the quaint use of rebuses and emblems worked into the foliage of trails or crestings. Mottoes and inscriptions were also introduced towards the end of the fifteenth century, particularly in the North, and the results obtained were extremely decorative, for the lovely black letter of the period was admirably suited for carving in wood (290, 291).

The figure carving of this period was often as good as any of an earlier date, but that of the misericords can only be described as decadent. The wood-carver of the fifteenth century liked his work to be seen, and probably thought that it was thrown away in such an obscure position.

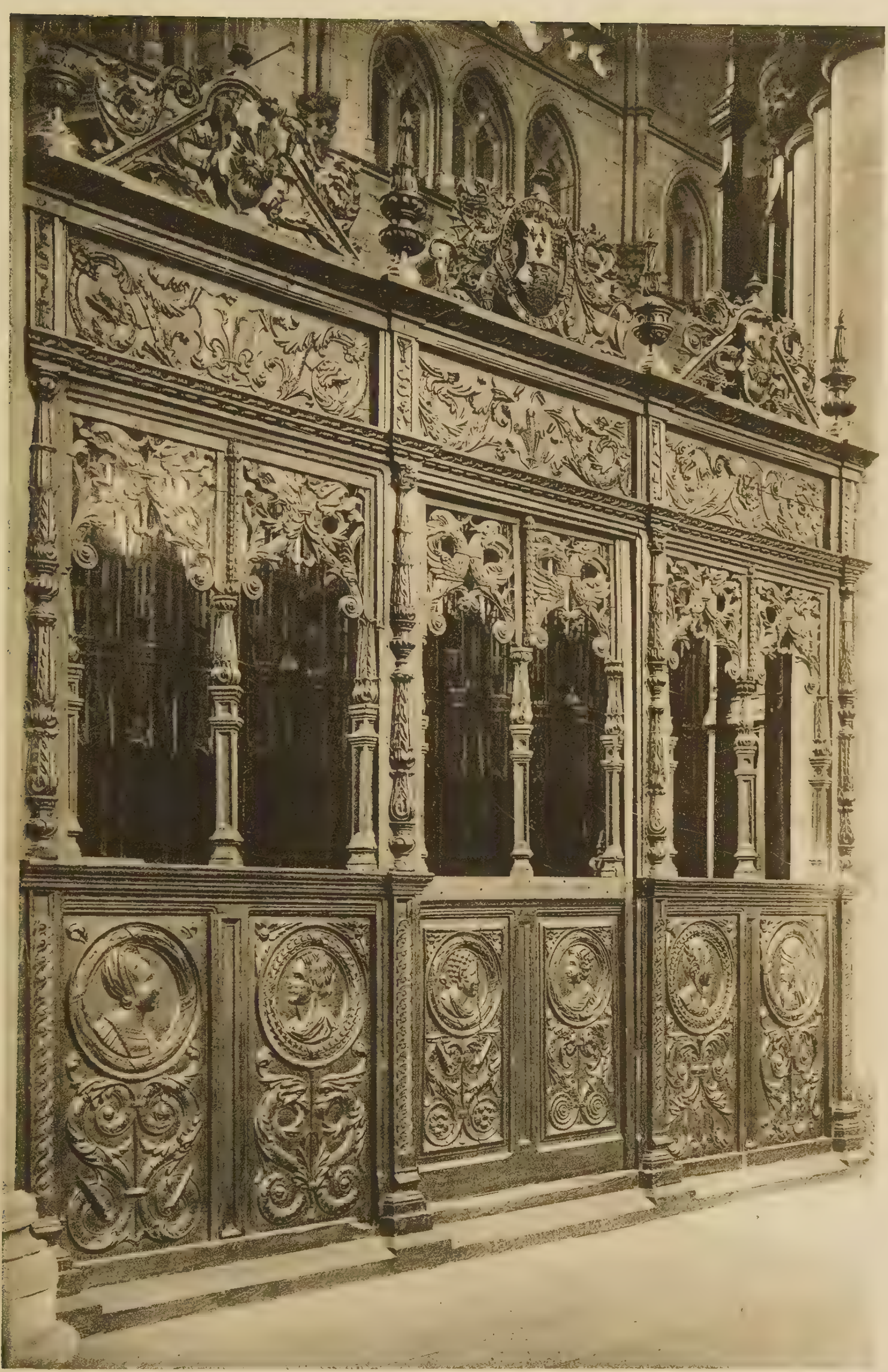
It is in the management of tracery, whether pierced or carved in the solid, that the later wood-workers chiefly distinguished themselves. They appear to have taken a real delight in this form of ornament. All the preceding styles were drawn upon for ideas. Geometrical, curvilinear, rectilinear, and flamboyant motives were used indifferently all through the century, as at Llananno (30) and Chester (22). The designs tended to become more and more elaborate and delicate; floral spandrels, crockets, and cusp finials were introduced, more and more freely, until finally the branching bars of the tracery became stalks, breaking out into foliage instead of cusping, as at Llanrwst (270).

Until the last quarter of the fifteenth century English woodwork was practically independent of all foreign influence. The importation of Flanders chests, such as that of Wath (349), in the fourteenth century, seems to have had little effect upon the native style. But from this time onwards the influence of Continental woodwork began to make itself felt in the southern counties. There are several screens in Devon, namely, Colebrooke (31), Coleridge, and Brushford, with a curious type of flamboyant tracery, used in conjunction with linen-

VARIETY IN FIFTEENTH-CENTURY TRACERY DESIGN


F.H.CROSSLEY.1916.

CHESTER CATHEDRAL, FRAGMENTS OF SCREENWORK



CARLISLE CATHEDRAL, PRIOR SALKELD'S SCREEN. 1542.

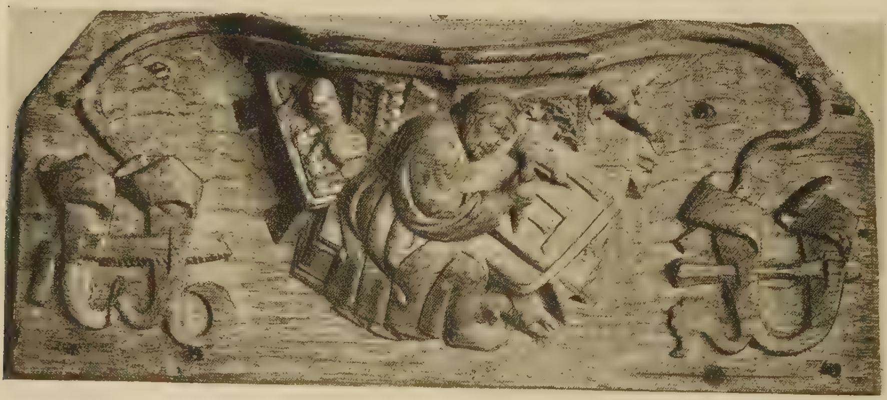
fold panels and quaint shafts carved into scale or honeycomb patterns. This is a common type in Brittany. These honeycomb shafts were a popular type for bedposts, and they also occur in two Oxfordshire screens, Thame (32) and Charlton-on-Otmoor (32), which also have flamboyant tracery and linen-fold panels. There is a lovely series of these shafts, with splendid knops carved with emblems, at Dunstable, though the screen to which they belonged has been destroyed. There are many works of flamboyant character in the North, as at Hexham (222) and Carlisle (32).

Lullingstone, Kent (31), has a very beautiful screen which is absolutely alien in type. It is of Flemish design, evidently the work of foreign wood-workers, for its strange intersecting tracery and peculiar moulding are found nowhere else in England. The magnificent stalls of St George's chapel, Windsor, and Henry the Seventh's chapel at Westminster are also of distinctly Flemish design, though they appear to have been made in London by Englishmen. The two fine chantry chapel screens at Lavenham are also examples of the influence of the art of the Low Countries.

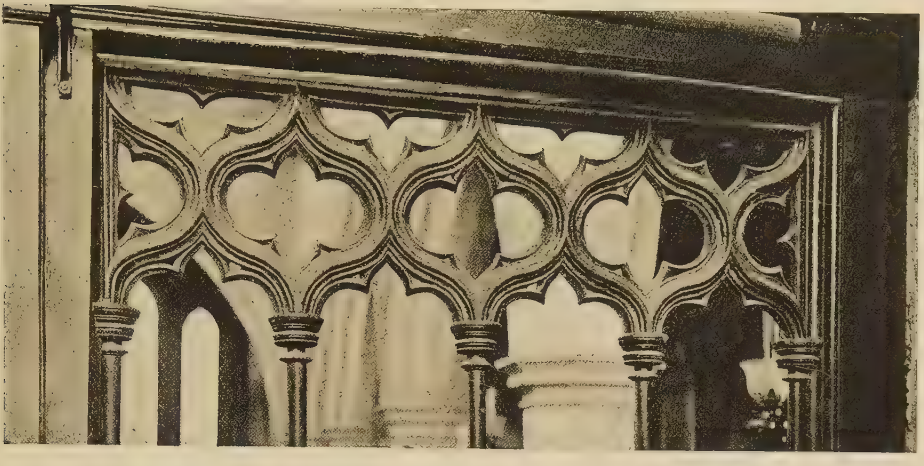
Foreign influence in a design may be due to several causes. The work may have been imported ready made from the Continent, as in the case of the Flanders chests, or it may have been made in England by foreign artificers, who would naturally be forced to employ a certain amount of native labour; it may have been the work of English wood-workers familiar with the work that was being done on the Continent at the time, or the foreign influence may be simply due to the wood-worker having seen and admired, or having been instructed to copy, one of these alien works. Much of the flamboyant work so freely used in the south-western counties, though absolutely un-English in feeling, cannot have been carved by aliens, since the technical details of the cusping are worked in a manner essentially English and unknown on the Continent. There can be no doubt that in these cases the native carvers took their ideas from the imported Flemish chests.

The fertility of design in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century was astonishing, and at the same time a new motive, once invented, was rarely discarded. It was the Golden Age of English woodwork. It has been the custom to consider this as a period of decadence, and to consign all poor woodwork to a late date. Fortunately, the custom of dating screens and other important church furniture which came into use about this time enables us to prove the falsity of this theory. The dated screens of Ludham (1493), Wensley, Mobberley (1500), Trunch (1502), Aylsham (1507), Marsham (1507), are incomparably finer than any of an earlier date. Yet the whole art of woodwork was about to undergo almost complete extinction.

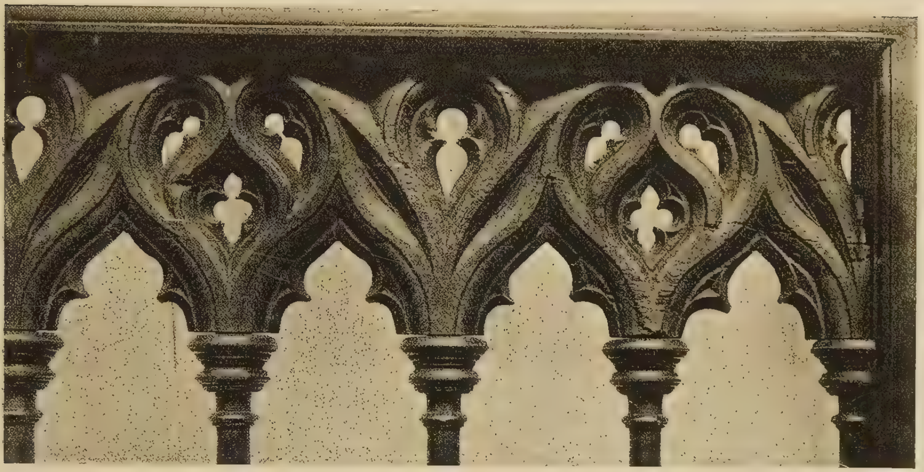
Was this due to the "foul torrent of the Renaissance"? It does not seem likely. There is very little pre-Reformation woodwork in England showing any signs of Renaissance influence save in the south-western counties, where it arrived by way of France in the first decade of the sixteenth century. Only the carving was affected. The foliage began to assume the characteristics of the classical acanthus, and was mingled with arabesques and dolphins, while amorini of a rather insular solidity sported on the bench-ends and screen panels. This early Renaissance carving is often of masterly design, and splendidly worked, as at Littleham (33). The designs are well balanced and remarkably effective, however much we may regret the more natural foliage and stiff but pious angels of earlier days as at Plymtree (33). Certainly these artless efforts at originality can have had little to do with the overthrow of Gothic art, which was due to social and religious causes, rather than the influence of any artistic movement.



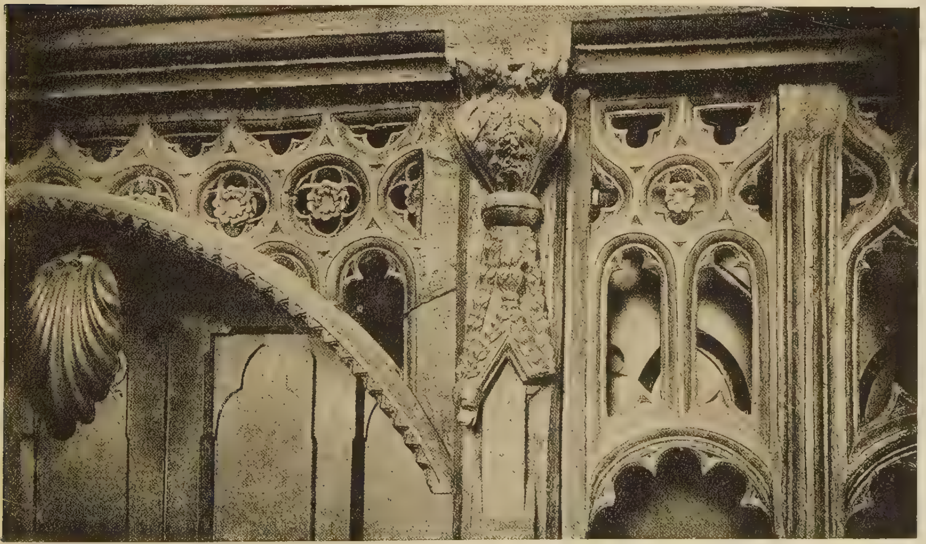
ST NICHOLAS, KING'S LYNN, EARLY FOURTEENTH-CENTURY MISERICORD (NOW IN VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM)



KIRK ELLA, YORKS., SCREEN, EARLY FOURTEENTH CENTURY

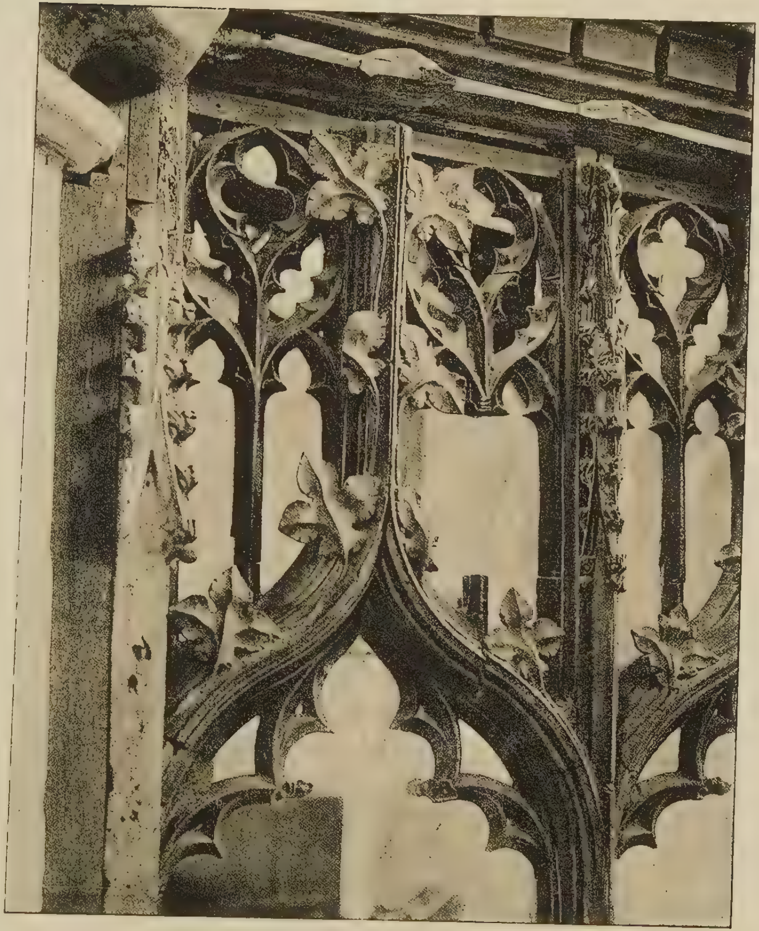


BEVERLEY ST MARY, SCREEN, MID-FOURTEENTH CENTURY

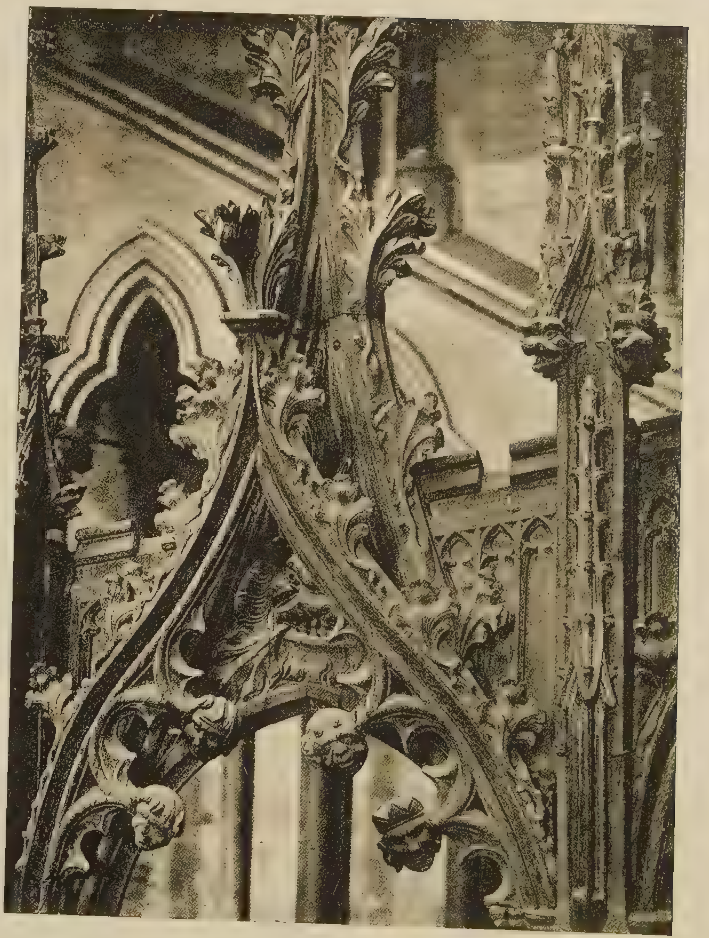


THAME, OXON, SCREEN, LATE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

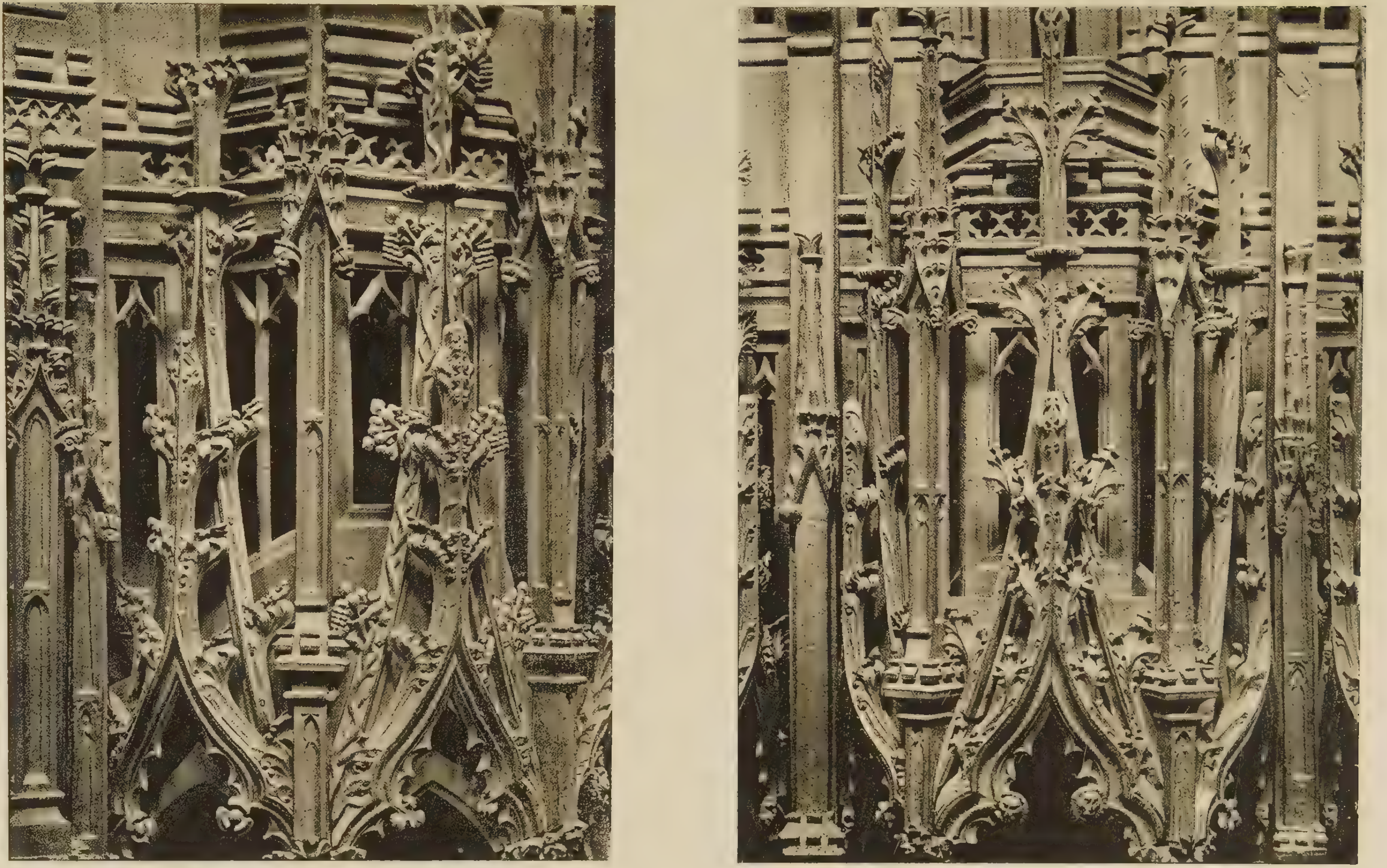
LATE FOURTEENTH-CENTURY DESIGN IN FOLIAGE AND TRACERY



GRUNDISBURGH, SUFFOLK, ROOD SCREEN

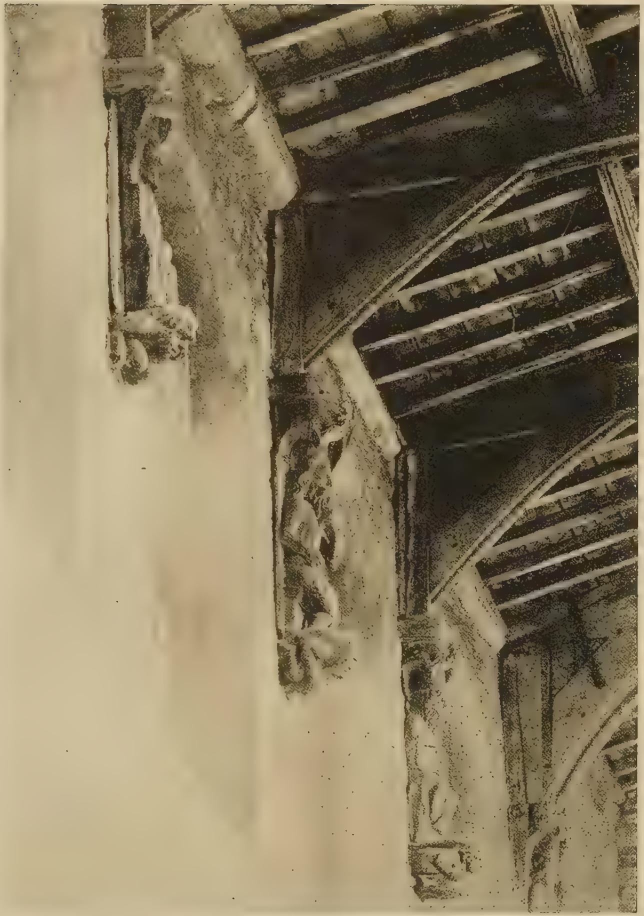


BEVERLEY MINSTER, YORKS., PARCLOSE SCREEN

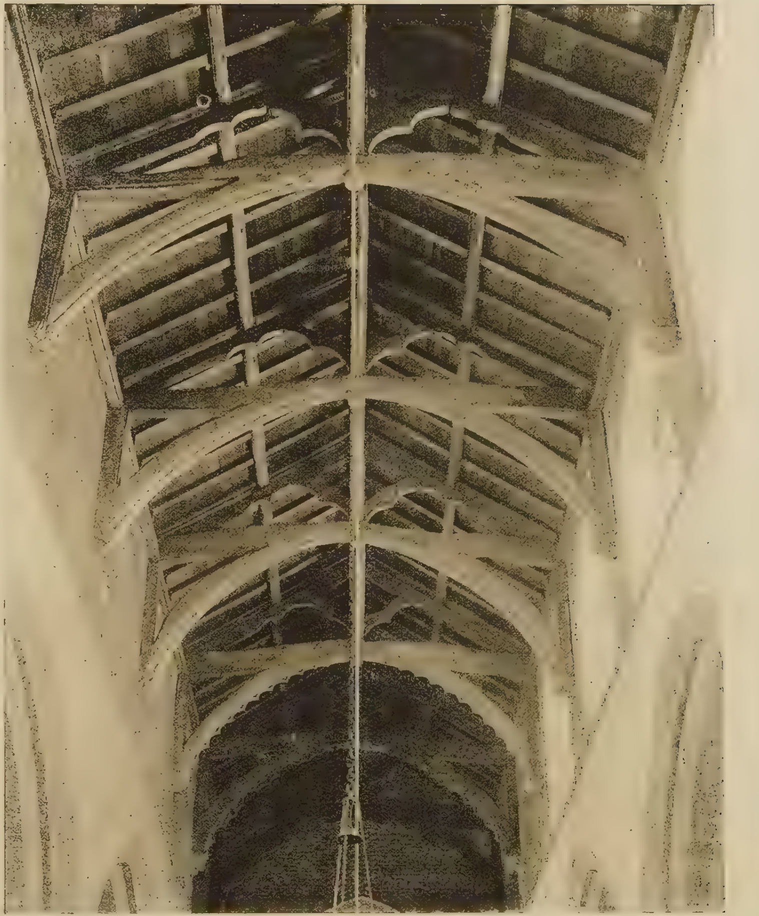


CHESTER CATHEDRAL, STALL CANOPIES

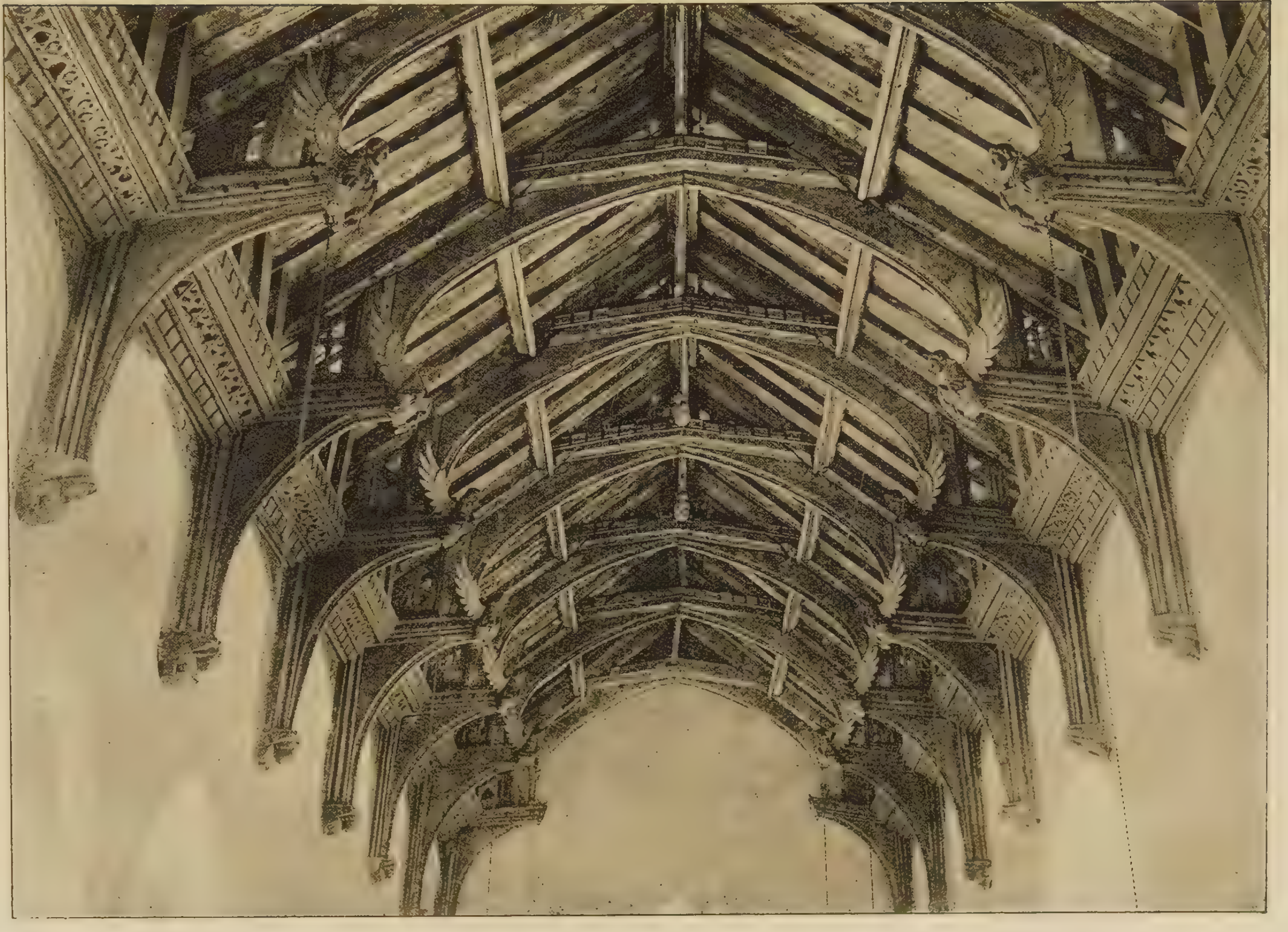
FOURTEENTH-CENTURY ROOF DESIGN



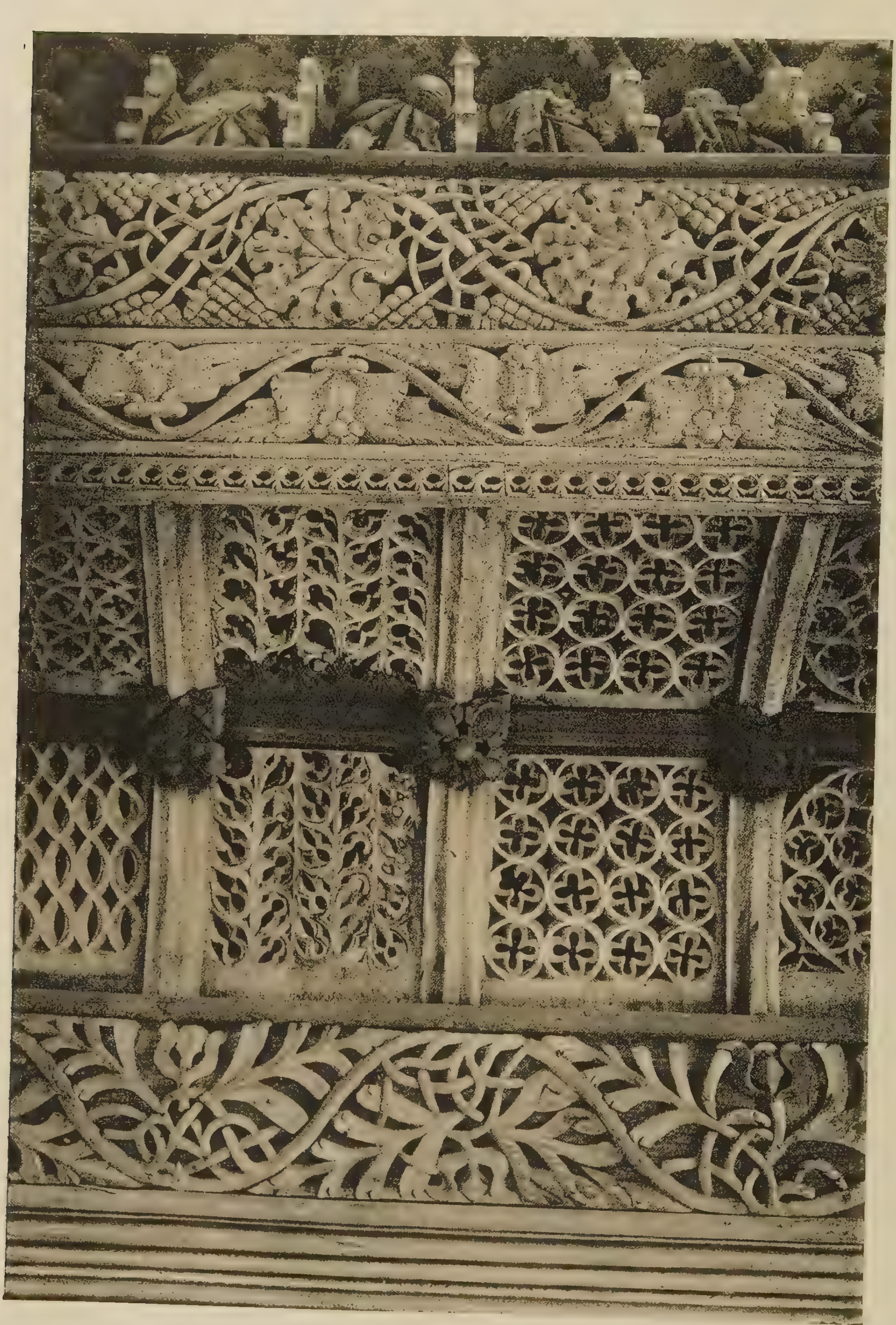
WHISSENDINE, RUTLAND, ROOF OF NAVE



ADDERBURY, OXON, ROOF OF NAVE

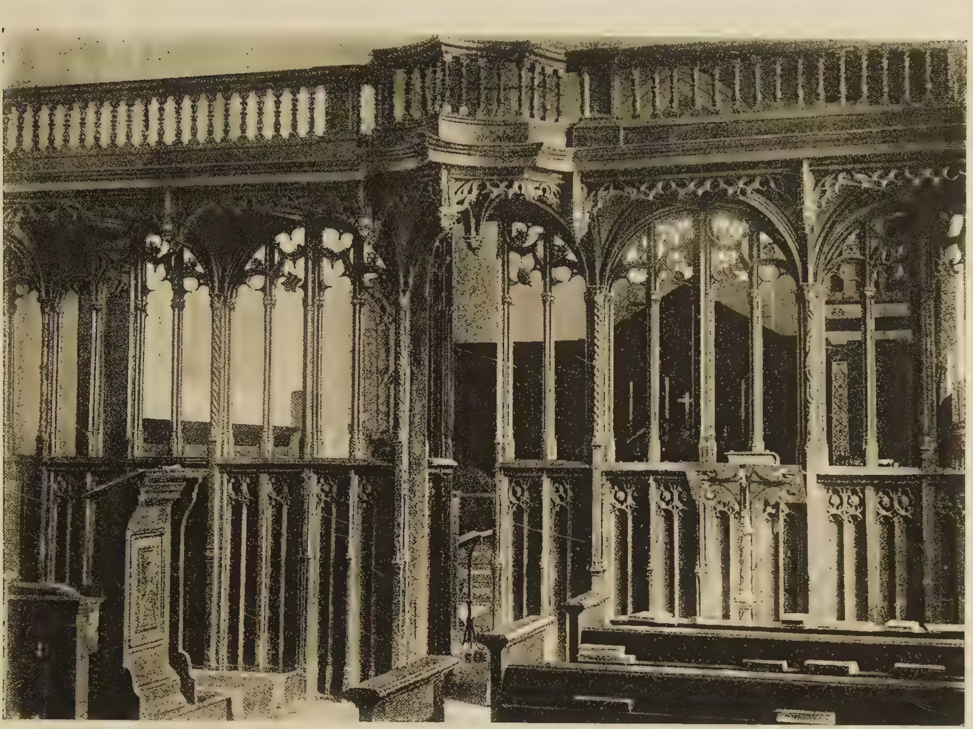


BADINGHAM, SUFFOLK, ROOF OF NAVE

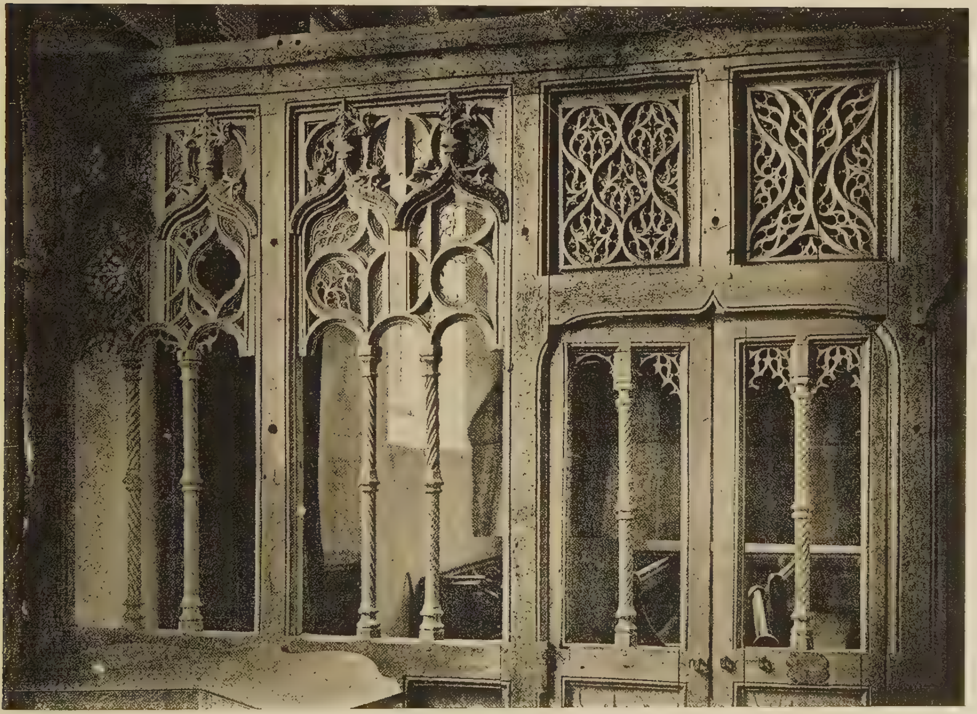


LLANANNO, RADNOR, COVING OF ROOD SCREEN

THE INTRODUCTION OF FOREIGN DETAIL IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

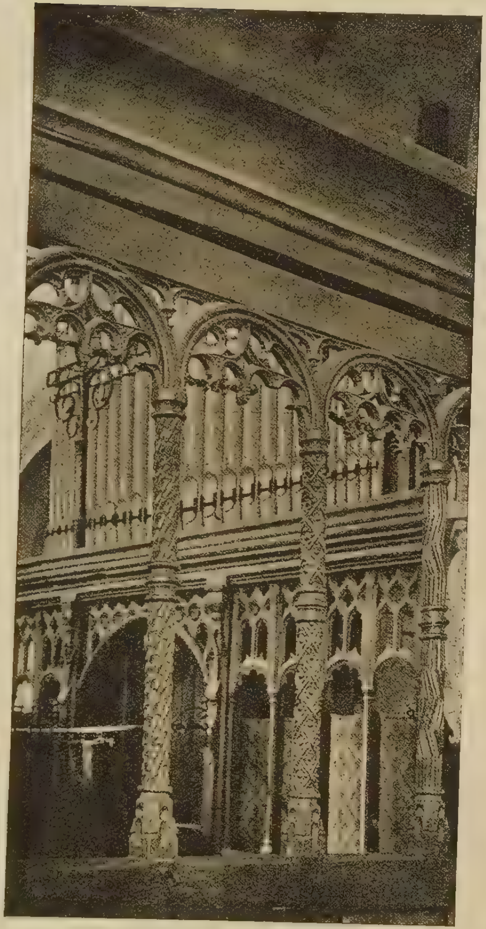


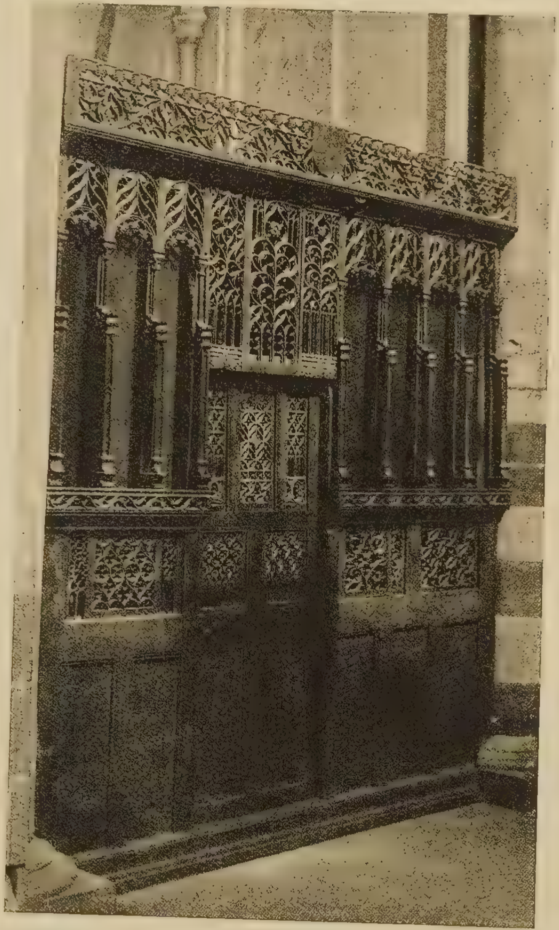
LULLINGSTONE, KENT, ROOD SCREEN

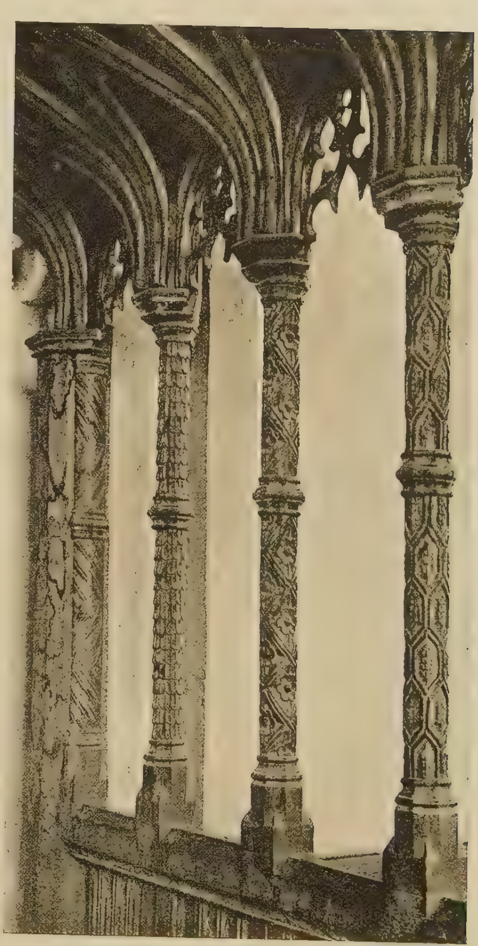


COLEBROOKE, DEVON, PARCLOSE SCREEN

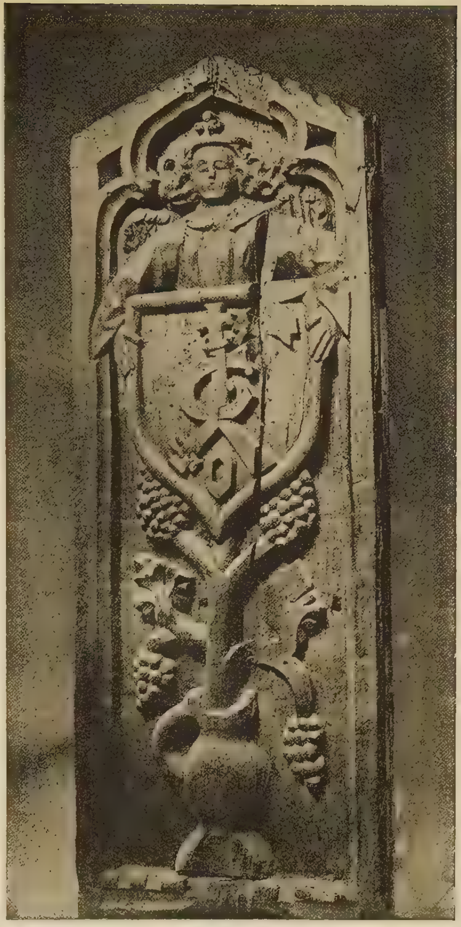
THE INTRODUCTION OF FOREIGN DETAIL IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY


THAME, OXON, SCREEN SHAFTS

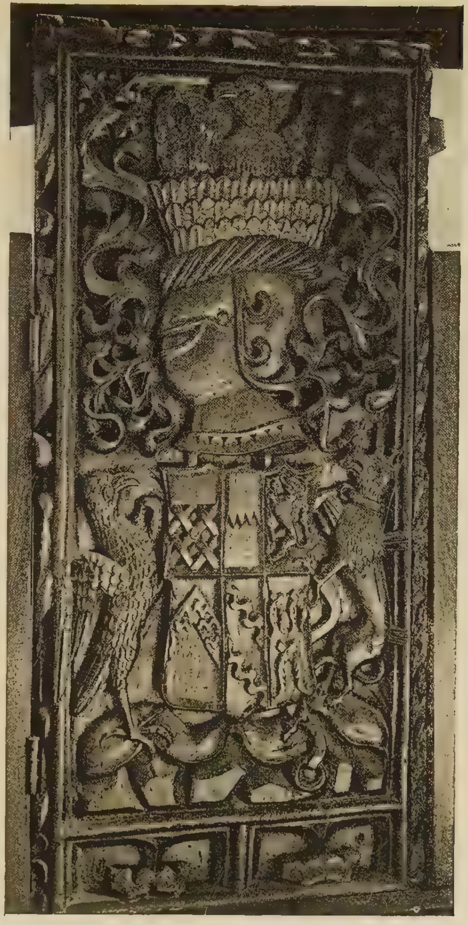

CARLISLE CATHEDRAL, ST CATHERINE'S CHAPEL


CHARLTON-ON-OTMOOR, SCREEN SHAFTS

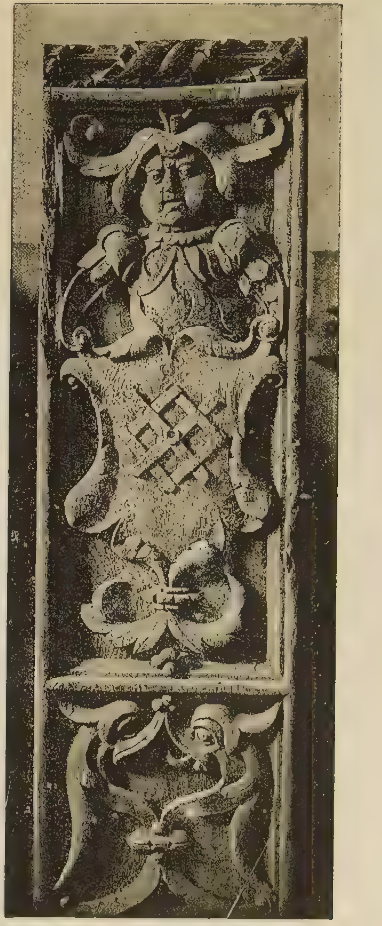
HERALDIC MOTIVES



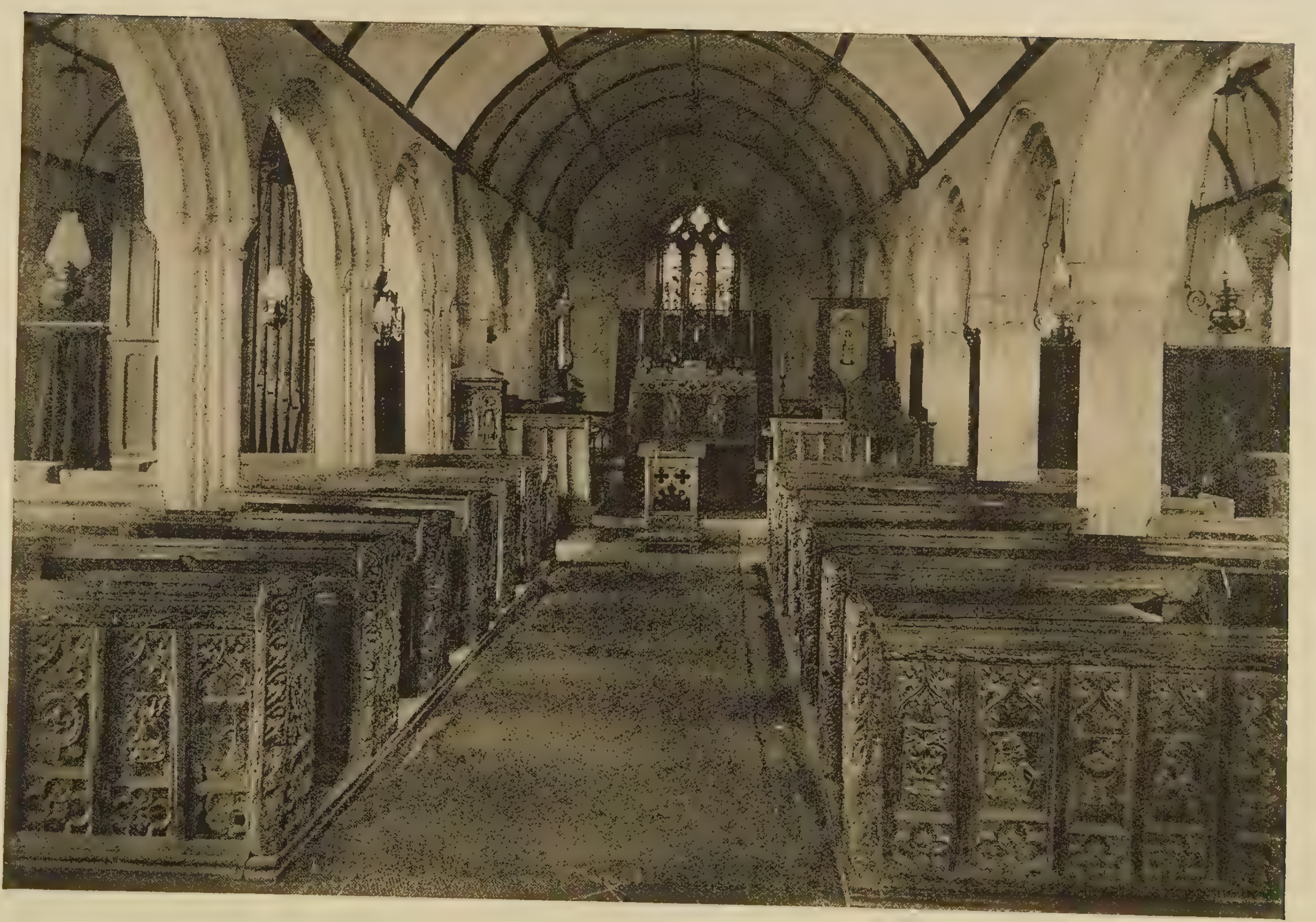
PLYMTREE, DEVON,
EARLY FIFTEENTH CENTURY



MONKLEIGH, DEVON,
LATE FIFTEENTH CENTURY



LITTLEHAM CUM BIDEFORD,
DEVON, SIXTEENTH CENTURY



MULLION, CORNWALL, ROOF, BASE OF ROOD SCREEN AND BENCHES

LOCAL VARIATIONS OF TYPE

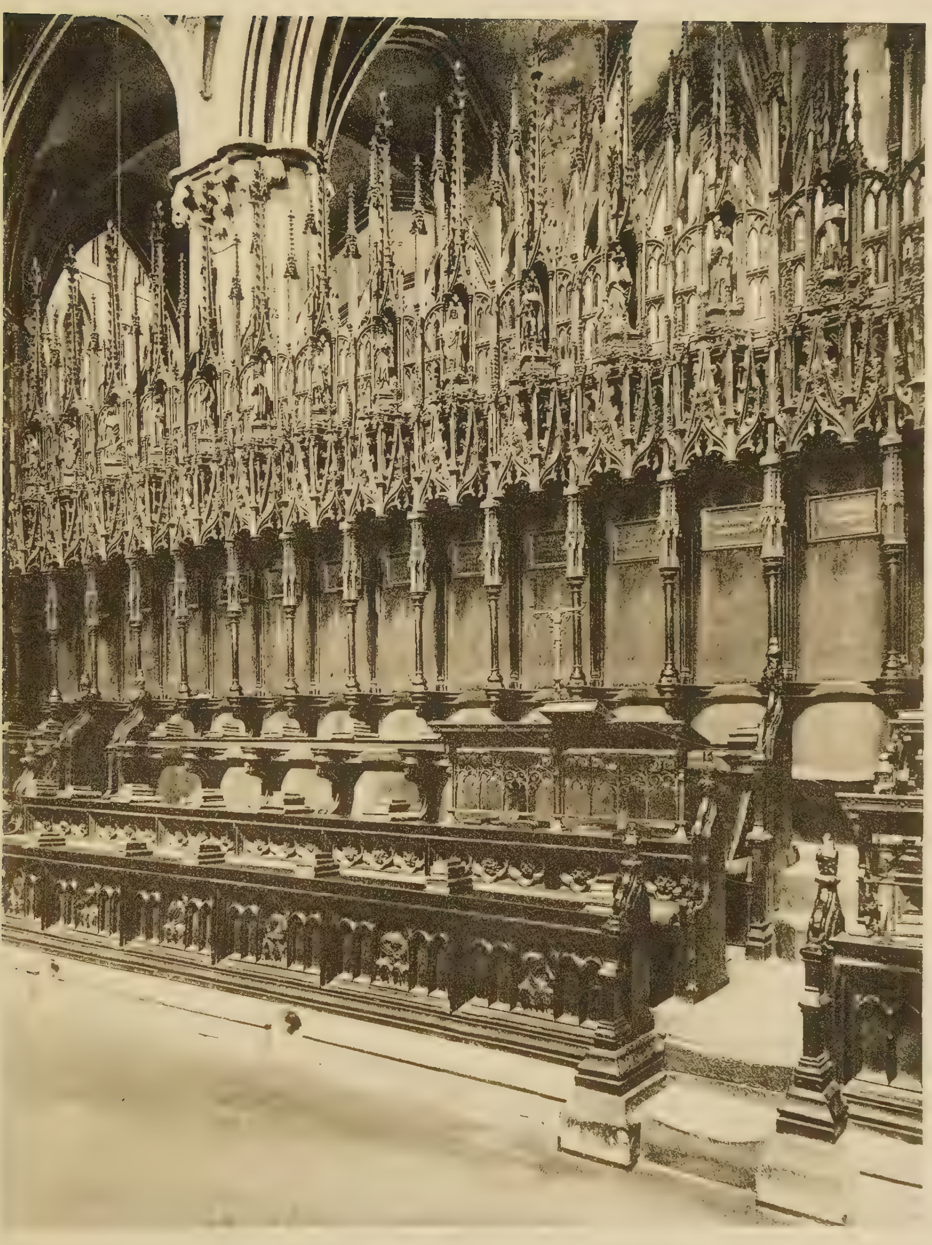
Leaving the consideration of the rise and development of the woodwork of mediæval England, we turn to the more complex subject of the individuality of the various types and schools. Primarily, England can be divided into three almost vertical strips, representing the areas of the three main schools, the Midland, the Eastern, and the Western, by means of lines drawn from Dorset to Cumberland, and from London to the Tyne.

Differences of race and history probably account for the existence of these three schools. The Midland is the style of the normal English race, the Western is leavened by the Celts, and the Eastern by the Danes. Naturally, they merge into one another in the counties near the border lines, and for this reason the woodwork of Herts., Cambs., Beds., Northants, Derby, and that of Dorset, East Somerset, Hereford, Salop, and Cheshire, is of the greatest interest and variety. It is delightful to study the effect of the various influences, blending or conflicting, in the same composition.

In nearly every district it was the screen that led the way, and influenced the design of the rest of the woodwork. In Devon and Cornwall, for instance, and in the Midlands, the screen, benches, and pulpit are composed of the same elements, and their design is co-ordinated. On the other hand, in East Anglia the benches, the font-covers, and the pulpits are designed on independent lines, and are almost entirely free from the influence of the screen. They harmonise, not because they are composed of the same features, but because they are inspired by the same feeling for proportion and line.

The Midland School (39, 40, 41) may be regarded as the typical English type. It is restrained, and sometimes a little ordinary, but it charms because of its quiet simplicity, and its suitability for its purpose, and because of its absolutely sound and reasonable construction. It is likely that a very great deal of the Midland work was produced locally by village carpenters, who were in no way specialists in church fittings and furniture. Though the works generally conform to the local types, it is very rare to find that the same hand has been at work on more than two or three items. Artistic *tours-de-force* must not be sought in the Midlands, but the lover of mediæval craftsmanship will meet with much good woodwork. Such interiors as those of Fairford, Ashby St Ledgers, and Higham Ferrers show how satisfactory was the quiet beauty and dignity of the Midland parish church when it still retained its mediæval fittings. The construction is generally of extreme simplicity. Arched work, building up, and carving in the solid are rarely employed. Most of the work is framed up in rectangular panels, which are often decorated with tracery heads, cut out of thin boards, and grooved into the frame. Foliaged ornament, whether in crestings, trails, or pateræ, is used almost parsimoniously, and the material is of moderate scantling. Indeed, the types of church furniture adopted in the Midland district are of a very modest character, and very economical compared with the costly types which are found in the rest of England.

The WESTERN SCHOOL is remarkable for its sense of surface and texture. It produced immense quantities of work of extraordinary beauty; a beauty due to the excellence of the carving and to the fertility of ideas in the ornament, rather than to the general design. Not that beauty of proportion is in any way lacking, but it sinks into insignificance beside the richness and quantity of the carving and ornamentation (43-45). The woodwork of the West is certainly the creation of specialists. None but a carefully trained craftsman with years of tradition behind him could hope to excel in the manifold design of the ornament, whether the intricate traceries of Wales (30) or the luxuriant foliage of the west country (43). Moreover, it is possible to trace various types of screens or benches to a common origin in the same workshop. These types are usually found in

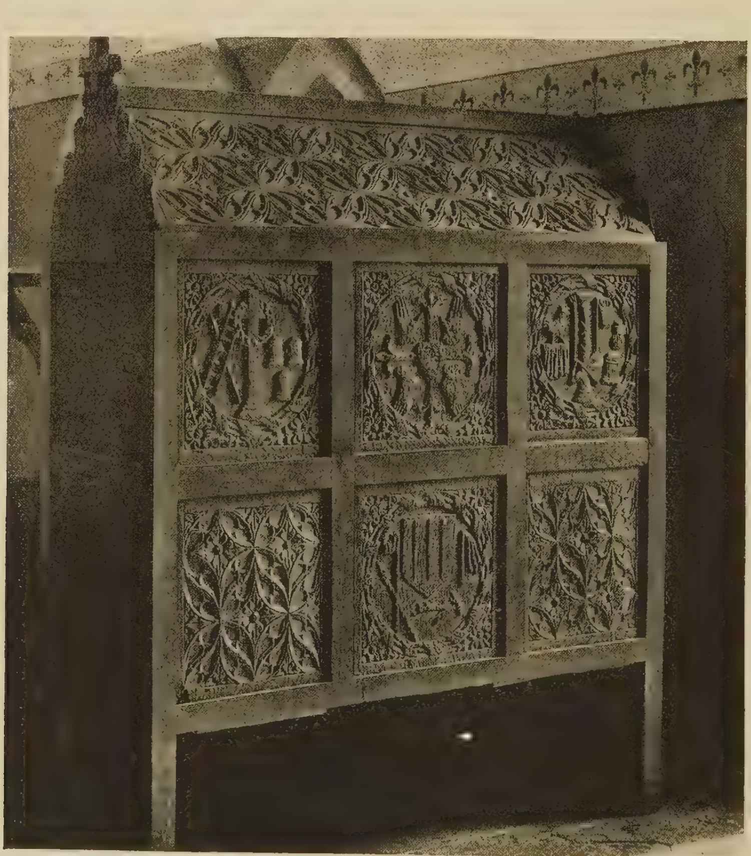


LINCOLN CATHEDRAL, STALLWORK, DATE 1370.

Photo. S. Smith.

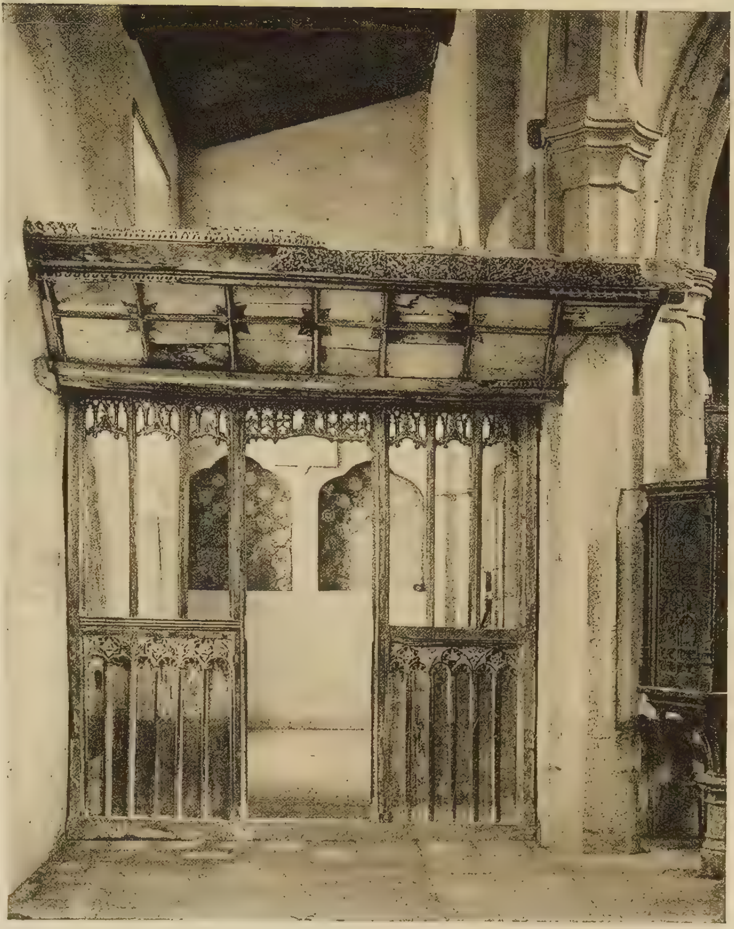
adjoining churches, showing that the work was produced at a number of local centres, having only a local celebrity. There are two distinct schools in the West, namely, that of the west country and that of Wales. The former is distinguished by a free use of the arch form and a lavish employment of foliage carving, the latter employs beam construction, and excels in the elaboration of tracery and tendril work. In the West, timber was very plentiful, and the great size of the members of the framing and the thickness of the planks out of which the benches are constructed is remarkable. The general solidity of the construction is the more noticeable because most of the west country woodwork is small in scale; the churches are low (210), the roofs are of narrow span, and the screens are of no great height. The carving is altogether bolder and more generous than that of the rest of the country. The foliage is usually extremely naturalistic, and birds, snails, spiders, and other creatures are seen among its convolutions. The great size of the leaves and their beautiful modelling, the admirable variety of the crestings, and the pateræ are very striking (43). Ashton (61), Swymbridge (45, 338-9), and Monksilver (292, 330), are good examples of west country churches retaining most of the ancient fittings.

The Eastern School (46-47) is distinguished by a fine sense of proportion, and by the beauty and free invention of the general design. Texture is altogether subordinate to line, and ornament is rather sparingly used. It is usually small and delicate in scale and very carefully studied. There is not the slightest doubt that the bulk of the eastern woodwork was made by skilled craftsmen, who devoted themselves chiefly to the needs of the Church. It was probably made at town centres, such as Norwich or York, under conditions very nearly approaching those of the present day. It is possible to trace the work of certain shops in churches widely scattered about the probable wood-working centre. While benches fall into local groups, as in the West, screens of the same type may occur in parishes many miles apart, suggesting that the centres were few in number, with a wide reputation. The churches of the eastern district are mostly on a much larger scale than those of the rest of England, and needed a stately, dignified, and restrained type of woodwork. The lovable little screens of the West, for instance, with their barbaric splendour of carving and their low proportions, would be altogether out of place in the wide and lofty churches of East Anglia and the neighbouring counties. The system of ornament, also, is almost entirely different. Instead of foliage, motives of purely architectural form, such as pinnacles, buttresses, battlements, and turrets, are the chief source of ornament. Foliage is, as a rule, confined to crockets, spandrels, and cusp finials; trails and crestings, though they often occur, play a comparatively small part in the general composition. The wide surfaces, such as panels, are usually decorated in colour only, instead of being encrusted with carved ornament. Southwold, Blythburgh, and Barking are typical churches of this district, in which most of the mediæval fittings can be seen in conjunction.

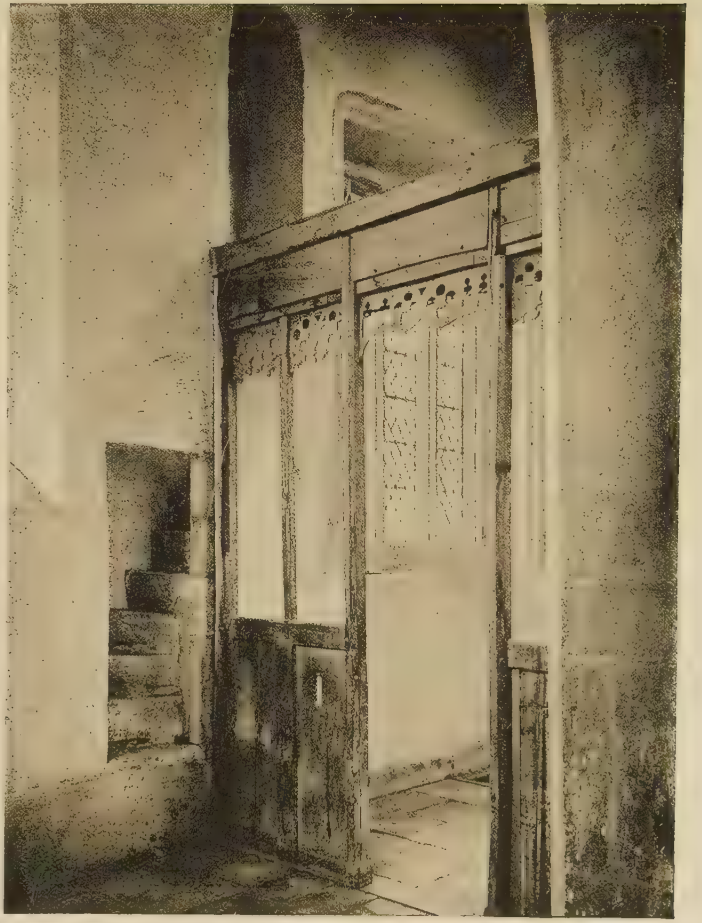


COYTY, GLAMORGANSHIRE, CHEST

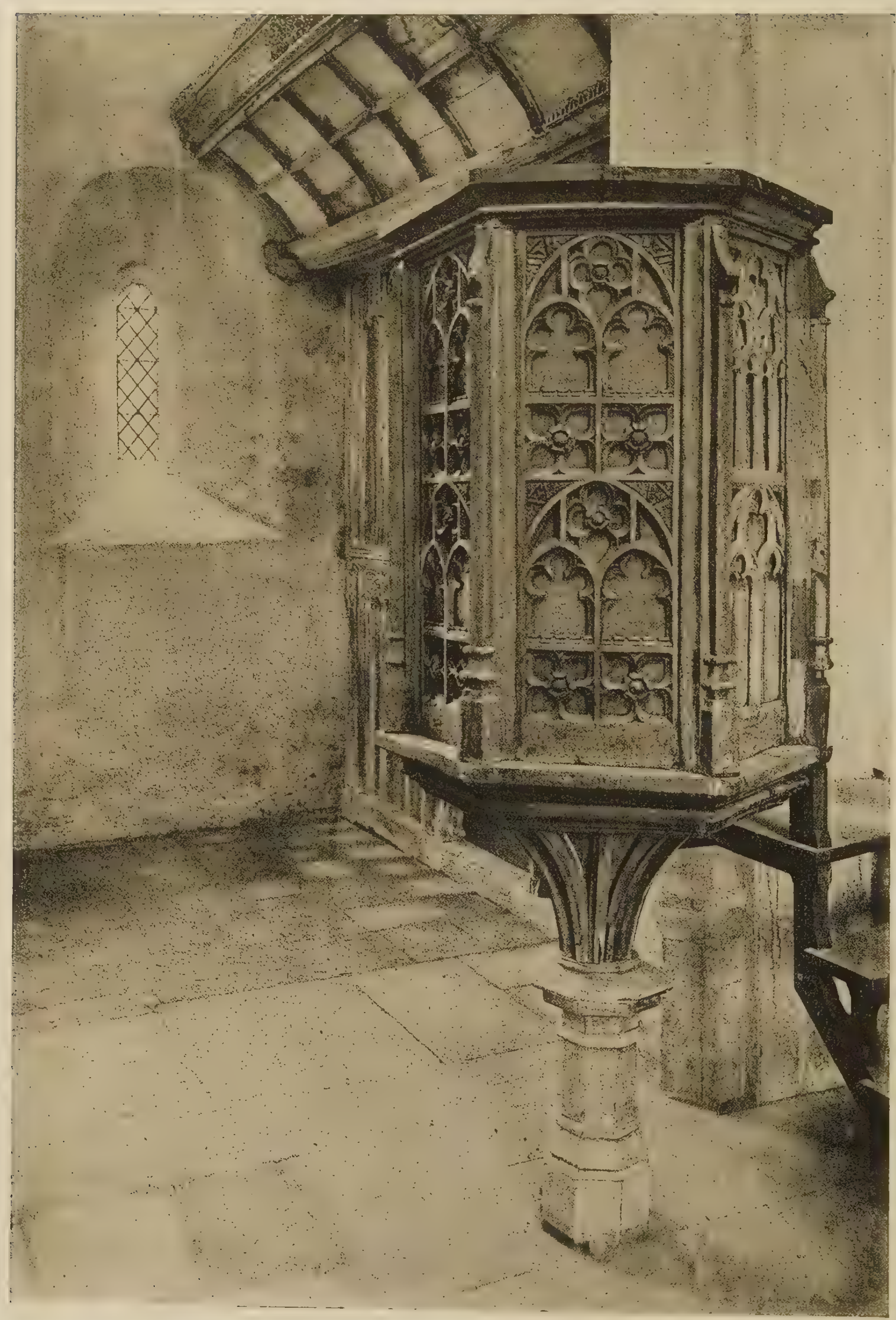
THE MIDLAND TYPE OF SCREEN



CHURCH HANDBOROUGH, OXON, NORTH AISLE SCREEN

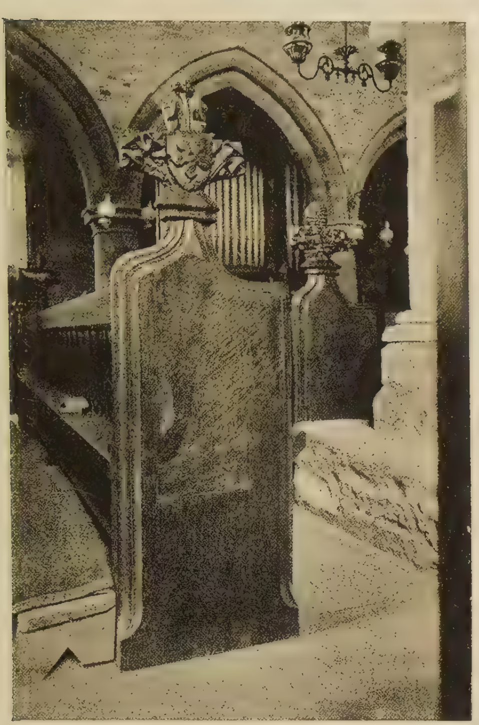


HANDBOROUGH, OXON, BACK OF SOUTH AISLE SCREEN

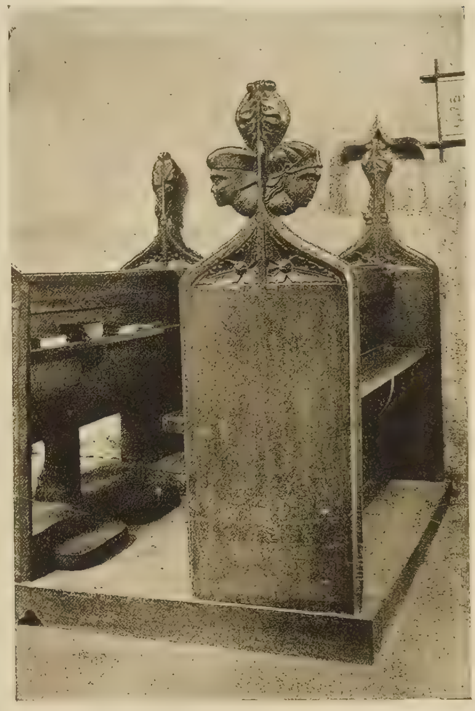


HANDBOROUGH, OXON.

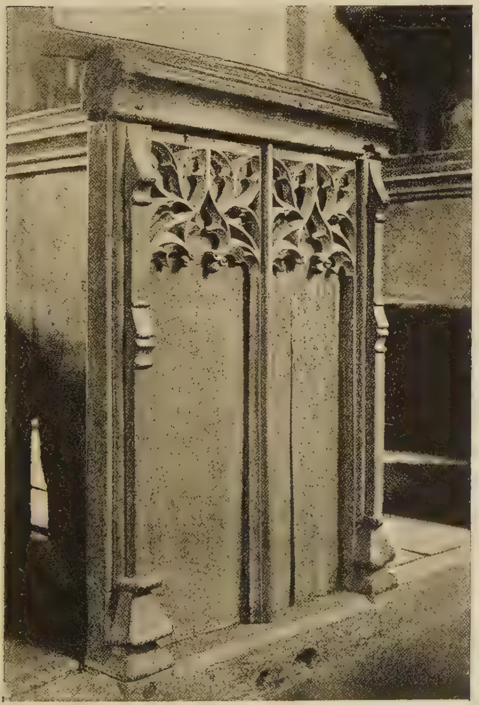
THE MIDLAND TYPE OF BENCHES (NORTHAMPTONSHIRE)



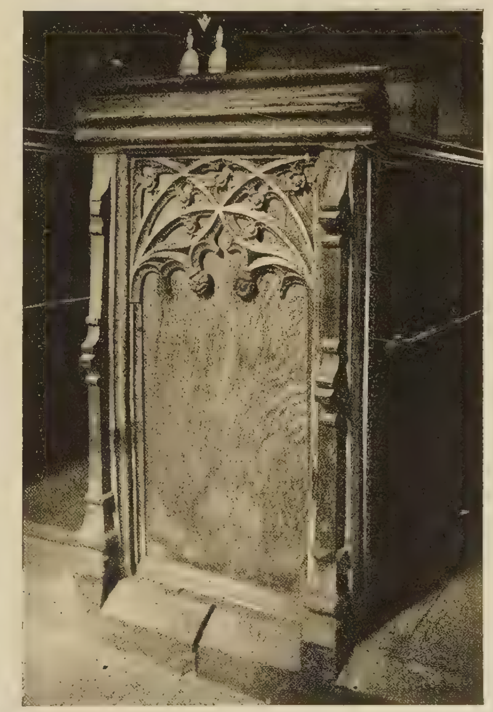
GREAT BRINGTON, NORTHANTS



LOWICK, NORTHANTS

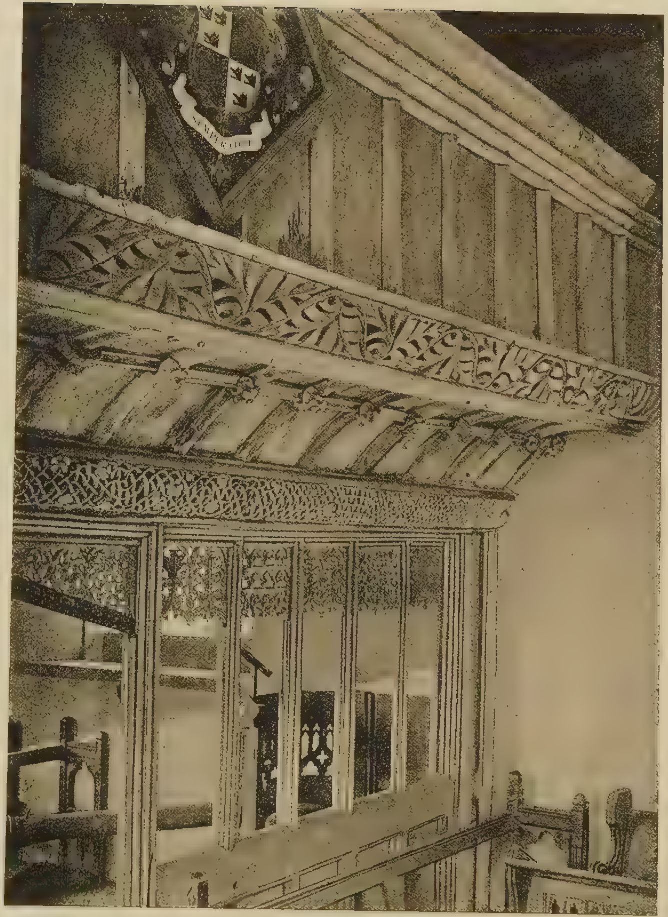


ASHBY ST LEDGERS, NORTHANTS

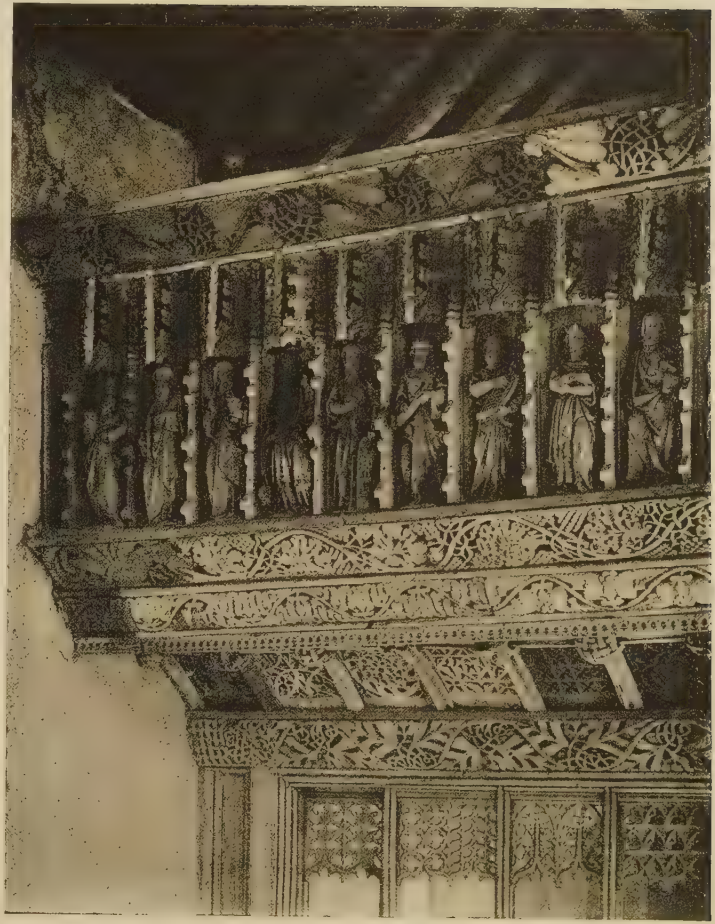


BYFIELD, NORTHANTS

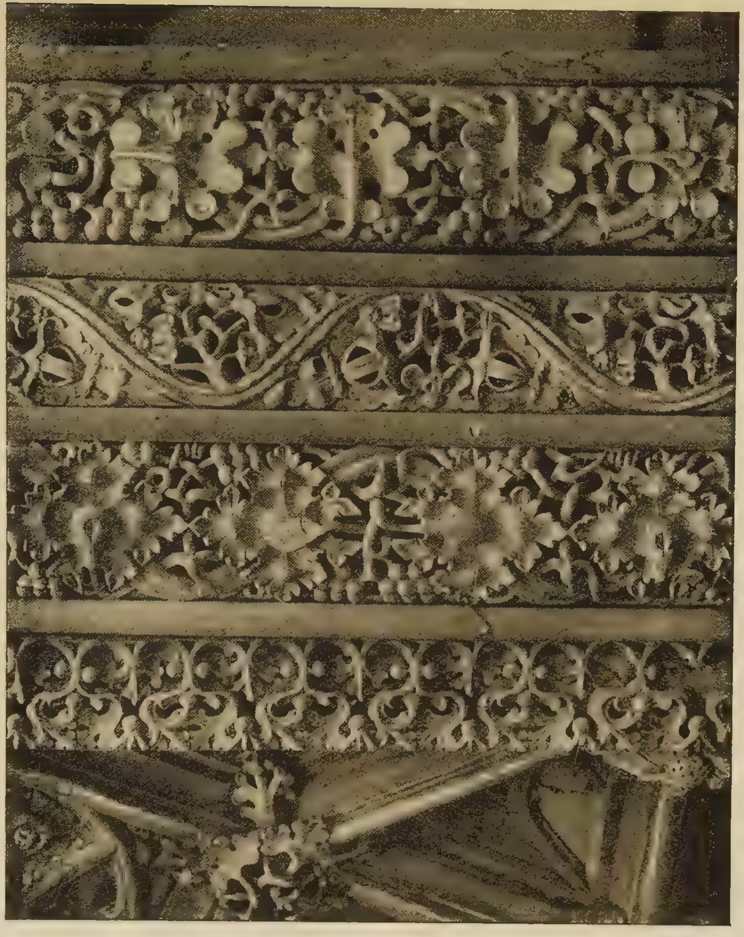
THE WESTERN TYPE (WALES)



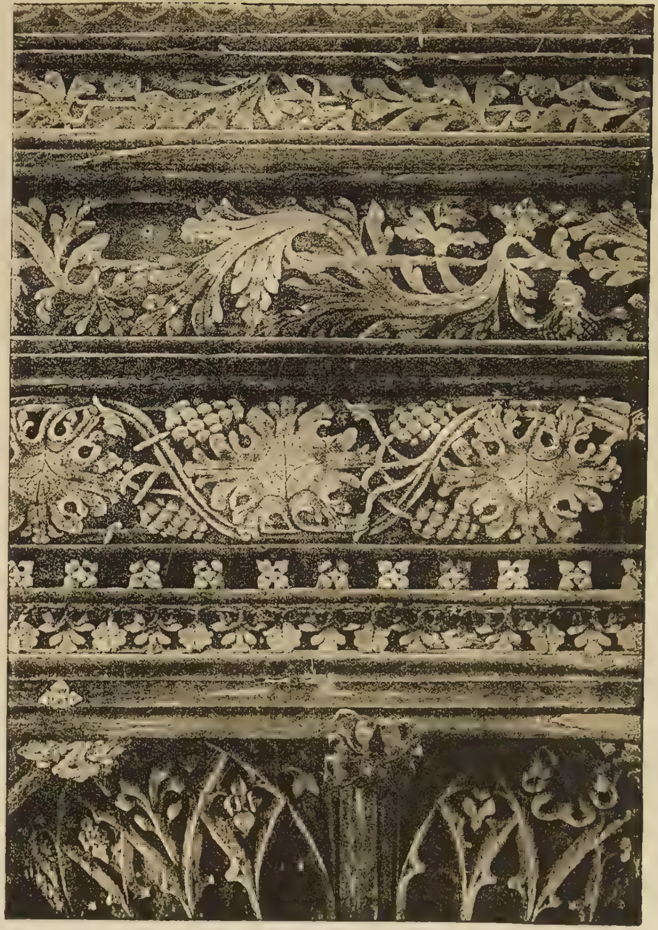
LLANANNO, RADNOR, EAST SIDE OF ROOD-LOFT



LLANANNO, RADNOR, WEST SIDE OF ROOD-LOFT

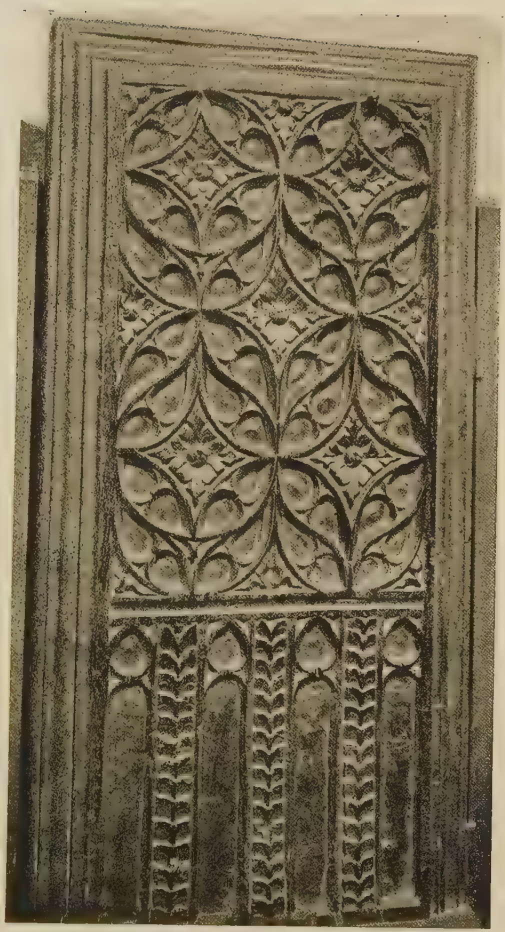


KENTISBERE, DEVON, ENRICHMENTS OF BRESSUMMER

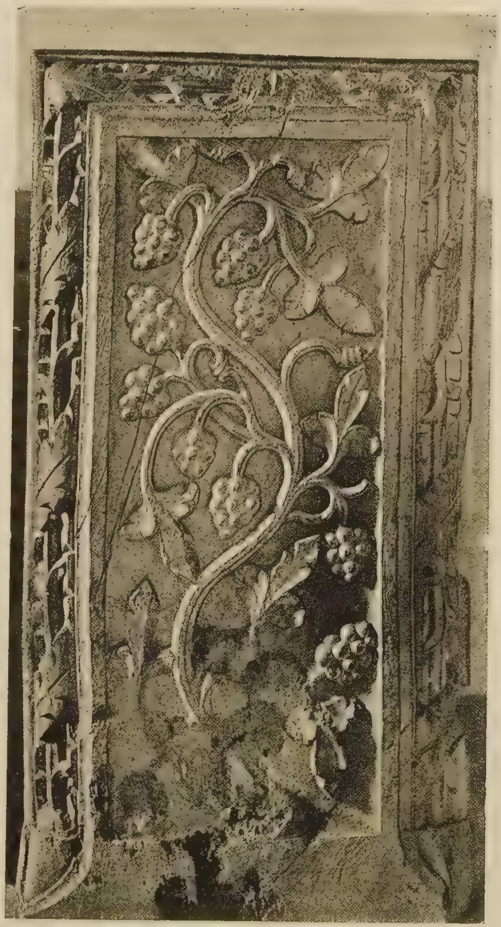


HIGH HAM, SOMERSET, ENRICHMENTS OF BRESSUMMER

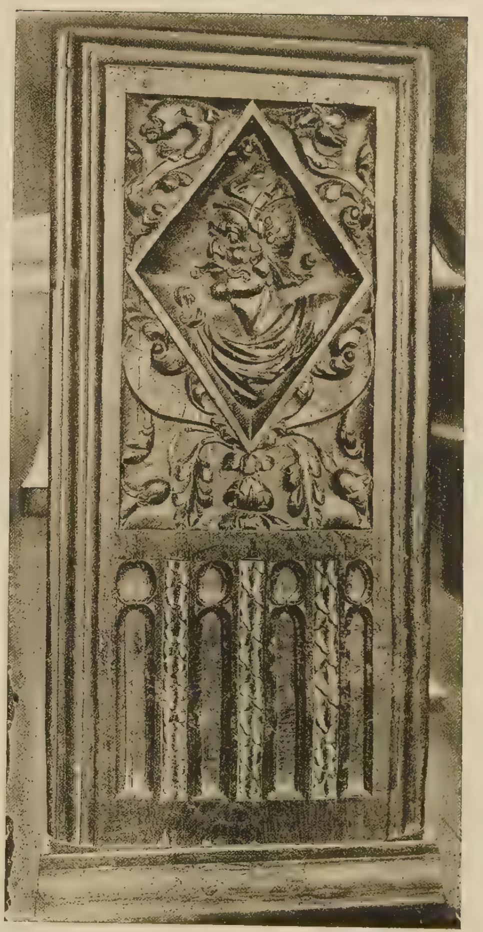
WEST SOMERSET TYPES OF BENCH-END



MILVERTON, SOMERSET, FLAMBOYANT

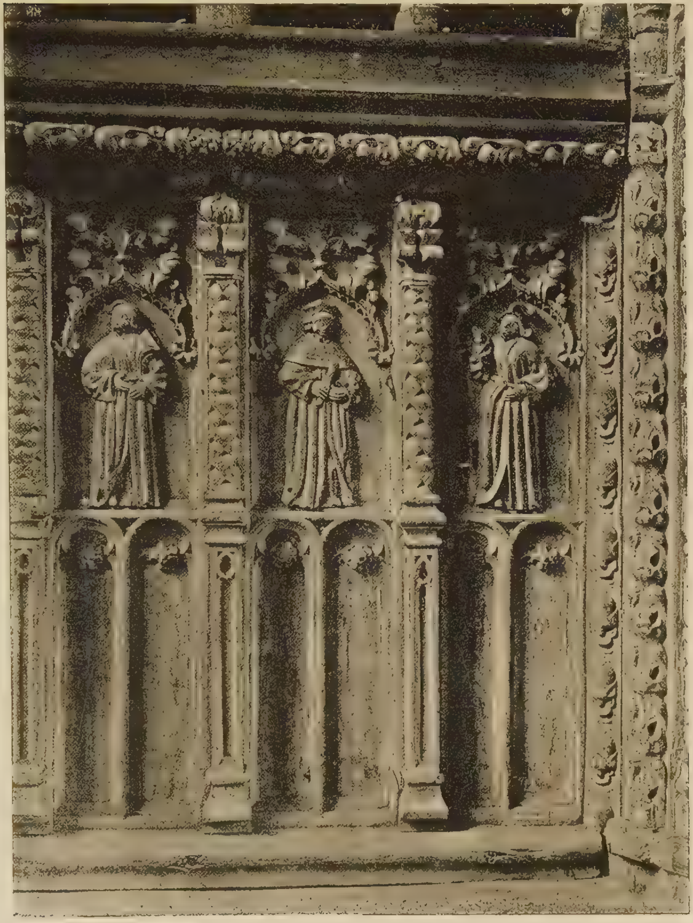


BROOMFIELD, SOMERSET, FREE FOLIAGE

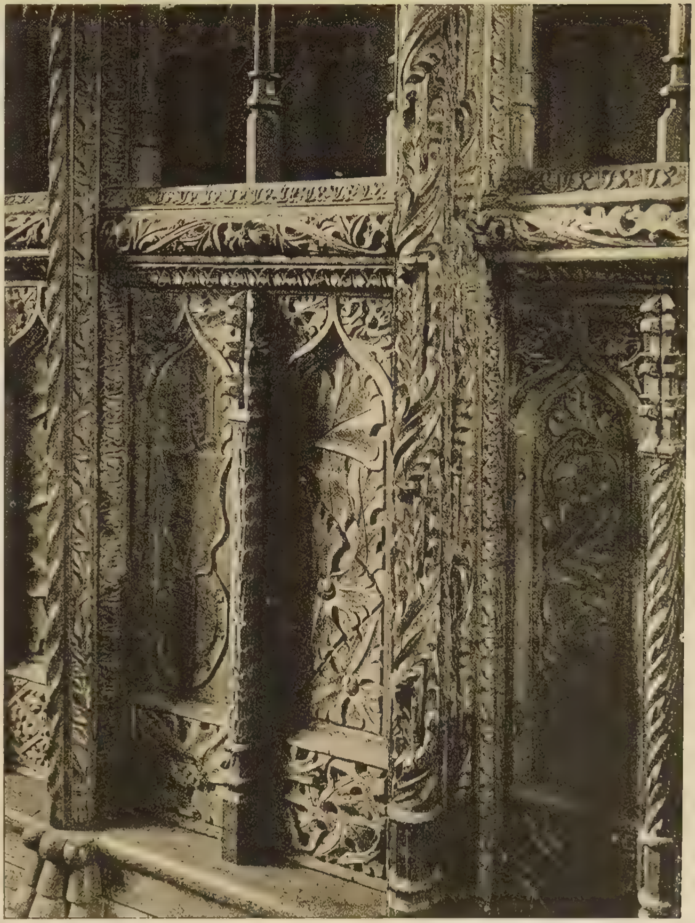


MILVERTON, SOMERSET, RENAISSANCE

THE DESIGN OF THE WAINSCOT (WEST COUNTRY—EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY)

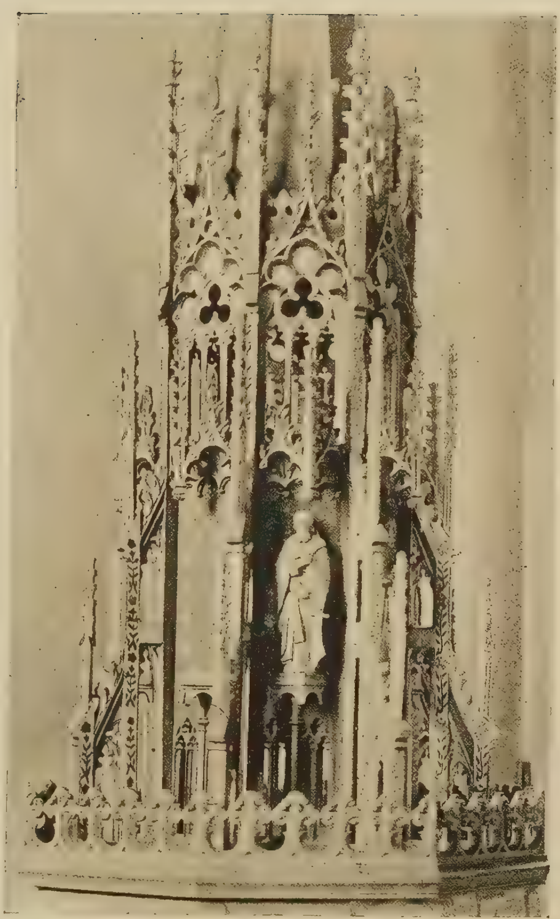


BRIDFORD, DEVON, CARVED PROPHETS

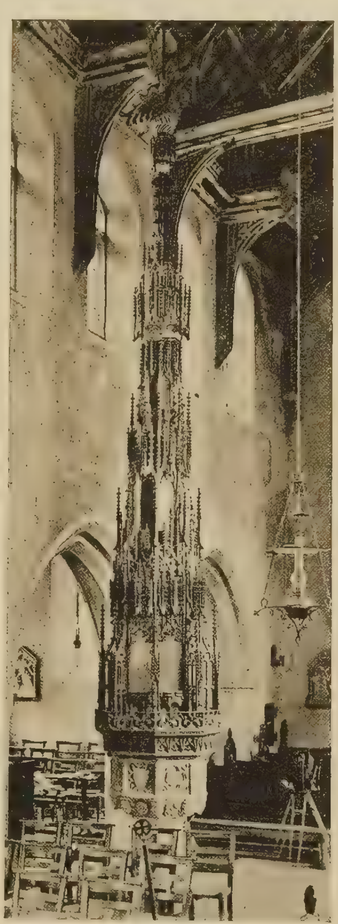


SWYMBRIDGE, DEVON, THE SEAWEED FOLIAGE OF THE WEST

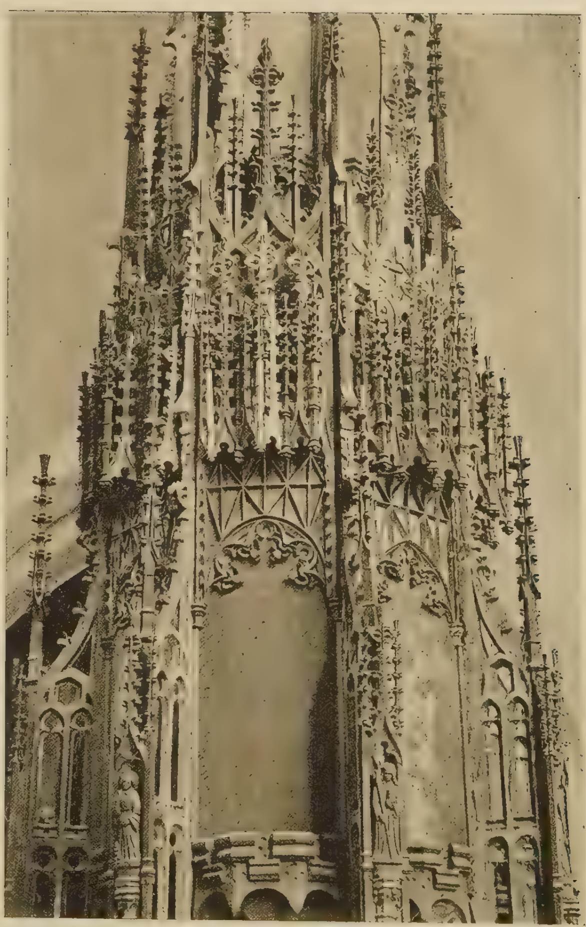
THE EASTERN TYPE OF FONT-COVER



ELSING, NORFOLK

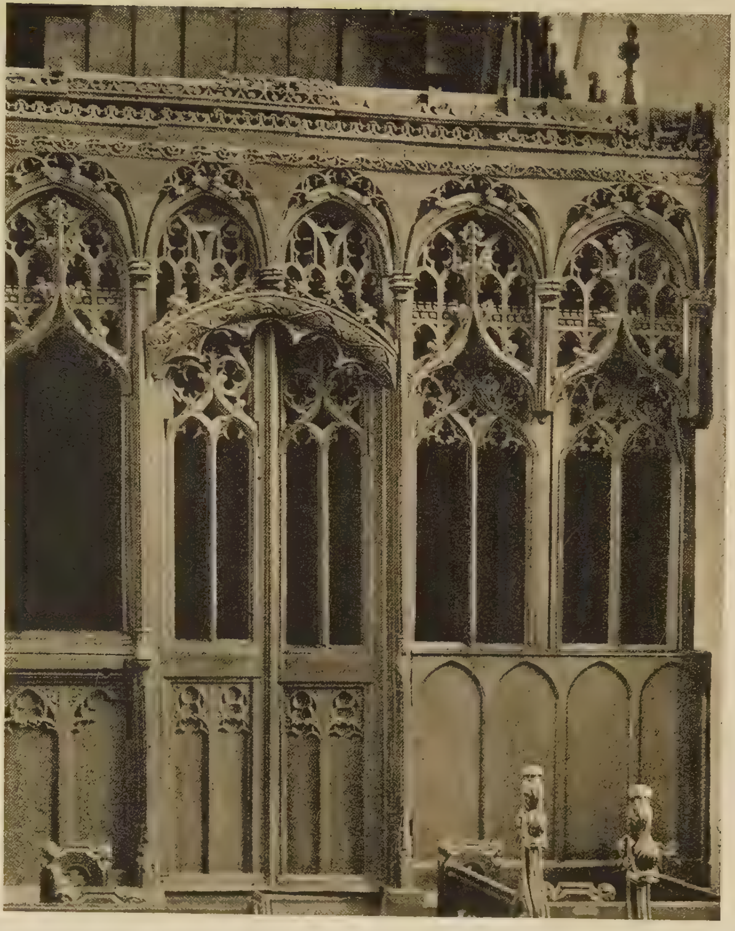


UFFORD, SUFFOLK

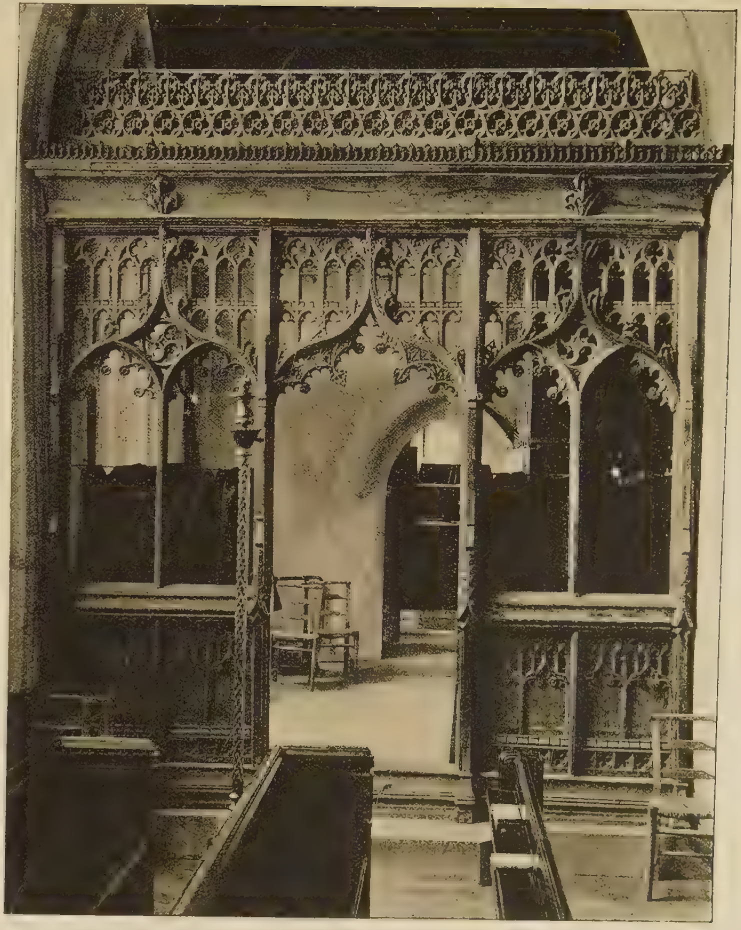


UFFORD, SUFFOLK, DETAIL

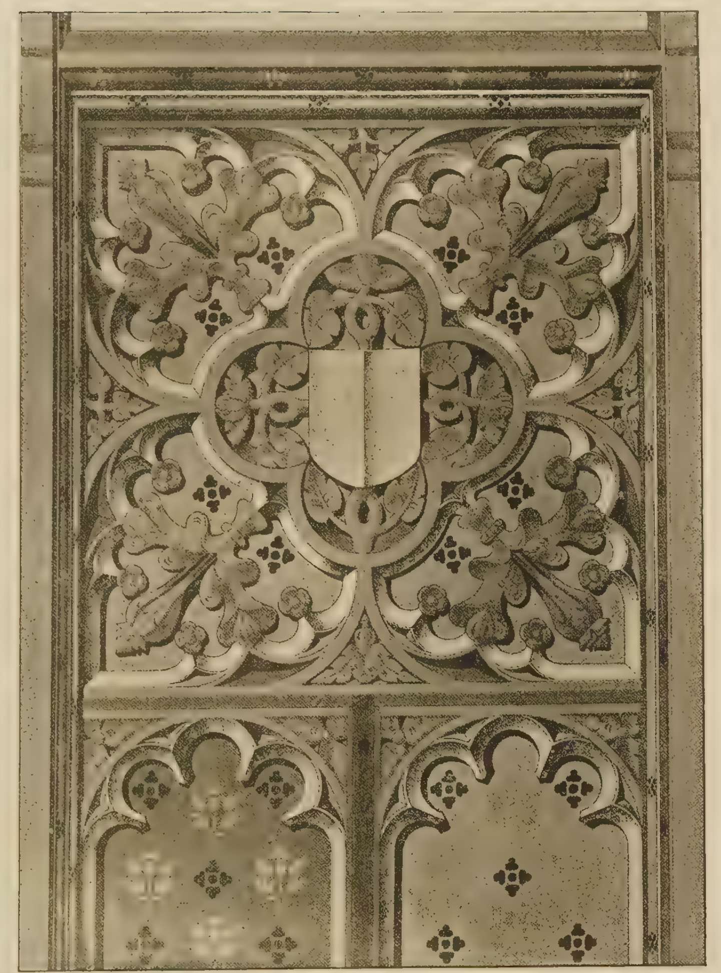
THE EASTERN TYPE OF SCREEN



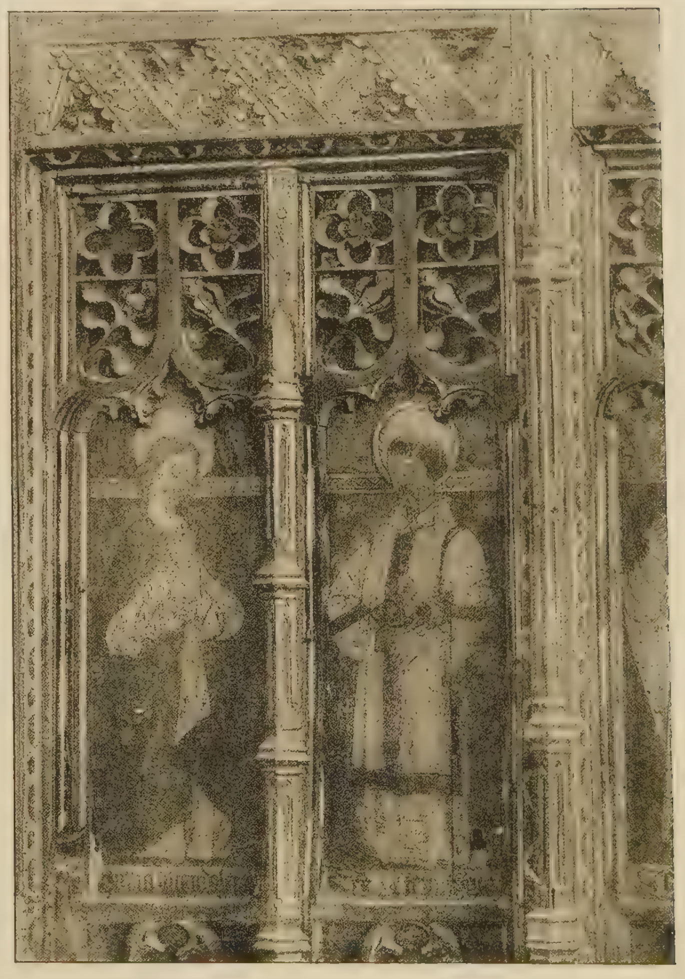
STAMFORD ST JOHN, LINCS., FIFTEENTH CENTURY



SOHAM, CAMBS., EARLY FIFTEENTH CENTURY



EAST HARLING, NORFOLK, WAINSCOT OF SCREEN



LUDHAM, NORFOLK, WAINSCOT OF SCREEN

COLOUR DECORATION

General Principles.—Few lovers of mediæval woodwork realise the important part played by colour decoration in pre-Reformation days. Nearly every screen, font-cover, and pulpit once glowed with pure bright colour, and gleamed with gold leaf, while even stalls, pews, and lecterns were sometimes painted. There are also very many examples of roofs, beautifully decorated in colour, with gilded bosses; and even when funds would not permit of a complete scheme of colour decoration throughout, the eastern bay of the nave roof was often painted to form a canopy over the rood on the screen below; or the roof over the high altar was similarly decorated.

Comparatively little mediæval woodwork retains its original colour. Its gaiety was offensive to Puritans, and it was very frequently concealed beneath a coat of drab paint, or worse still, by graining in imitation of the fashionable woods of the day. In the nineteenth century the restorers, not content with removing the later paint, pickled off mediæval and Georgian paint together. In case after case it is recorded that "beneath the modern paint, traces of mediæval colouring were discovered, but it was not considered desirable to preserve it." Some otherwise admirable restorations, particularly those of Devon screens, have been marred by the light-hearted destruction of the old colour, whole series of painted saints having been swept into oblivion. In the majority of cases the earnest student, peering into the recesses of the mouldings, can often discover traces of red or green, while flakes of gold leaf sometimes lurk in the interstices of the carving.

A considerable amount of lovely mediæval painting and gilding has escaped the barbarous treatment of post-Reformation days, notably in East Anglia and the west country, where the finest work is found. In the Midlands and the North, and in Wales, examples are rarer and of less beauty, and in many cases the work has been recoloured in modern times with disastrous effects, bringing the whole system of colour decoration into disrepute.

The mediæval system of colour was to use each tint (save white, which is usually the colour of parchment) in its purest and brightest form, avoiding large expanses of any one colour, and working more or less strictly in accordance with the rules of heraldry. Thus a green moulding is separated from a red one by a fillet of white or gold, a coloured ground may be powdered with gold or white devices, while the gilded carving stands out against a background of blue. Counterchange of colours is very popular. For instance, in most parts of the country panels of red and green alternate, the former with green hollows to the tracery, and the latter with red; or less frequently red and blue are counterchanged in the same manner, as in the stained glass of the day. Exceptions to the heraldic rule against putting colour on colour or metal on metal are sometimes found. For instance, black devices or patterns are sometimes employed on a red or green ground, a case of colour on colour; and some vault ribs are white, with gold fillets, an instance of metal on metal. Generally, however, the rules of heraldry are observed, for these were evolved in order to display the devices on shields to the best advantage. They are a sure guide to the successful combination of colours, and are not due to mere caprice.

In most works the colours chiefly used are red and green, with a good proportion of white and gold, while deep hollows and the undersides of covings or vaults are usually painted blue, a colour very rarely employed on a vertical surface. Carving is practically always gilded, though the interstices, difficult to reach with the gold leaf, are generally coloured, and the berries of a trail of foliage are sometimes painted red or purple, shading to green. Black is used in moderate quantities, usually twisted with gold round a bead, after the manner of a barber's pole; it is invaluable for throwing up the purity of the colours. That mediæval colour decoration, provided it has not been retouched, does not impress one as gaudy or unpleasant, as is the case with most modern efforts, is due to the use of clear, bright colours, which do not clash, as dingy tints, in attempted imitation of the old faded colours, are bound to do; and also to the avoidance of broad surfaces of any one colour. The effect is to divide and mix the various colours, so that they blend in a harmonious composition, just as the crudely brilliant red, blue, and yellow spots of a three-colour block combine to form subdued and mellow colouring.

It was, then, the ideal of the mediæval wood-worker that his work should eventually be painted and gilded, unlike that of the modern craftsman, who has a touching faith in the merits of good plain oak. Those who disapprove of the colour decoration of wood-work have altogether failed to appreciate the spirit of mediæval design, though they have some excuse for their heresy, since the clumsy efforts of some restorers have made colour decoration a laughing-stock. Nothing can be more painful than the sight of some lovely screen, such as Cullompton, Devon; Great Rollright, Oxon.; or Dennington, Suffolk (272), hatefully disfigured by poor paint, unskilfully applied in a wretched travesty of the original colour scheme.

As to the method in general use, it is pretty certain that oil was the usual medium, carefully flatted, and applied very thinly. There is, however, some reason to suppose that a kind of tempera, made not from egg, but from fish glue, was in occasional use in East Anglia. The usual process seems to have been to apply several coats of white paint as a ground on which to colour. The paint was apparently very fluid, and was applied in the smallest possible quantities, and a fine even surface was produced, absolutely free from brush marks, and without obscuring the finer contours of the mouldings. The colour was also laid on very thinly, probably in two coats, and the surface had a wonderful bloom, which has been destroyed in many cases by the disastrous application of varnish in modern times. The gilding appears to have been laid on a red ground.

In most English work great economy was observed in the use of gold. For instance, it is rarely found on the back of a screen, where yellow takes its place, and it is not often used in roofs, except in the enrichment of bosses. The eastern side of a screen is seldom so elaborately painted as the west. The colours are often less brilliant, and perhaps were of inferior quality. Often it is left quite plain, but at Ashton the figure paintings at the back of the screens are much finer than those of the front, though the colour scheme is very simple, while pretty tapestry patterns occur in the rear of the screen at Ranworth.

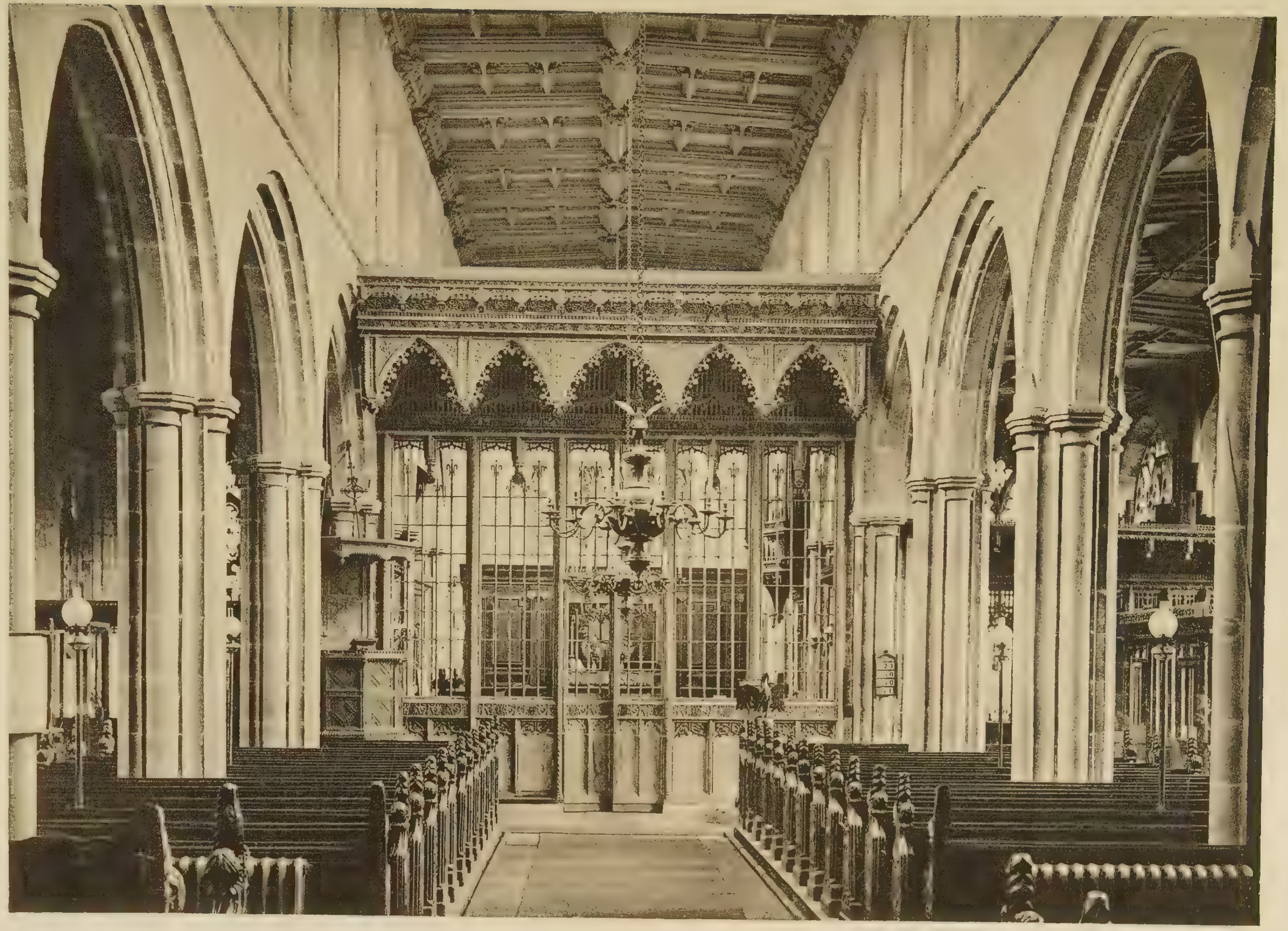
Colour Decoration in the Midlands.—In work of the Midlands the colour decoration usually stopped at the picking-out of each moulding in a separate colour, generally according to the rules of counterchange. Enrichment of the surface was not often attempted, and, save for the common use of a black and gold barber's pole pattern on the larger beads of the mouldings, two colours are not often used on a single member. Two Oxfordshire screens may be cited as good examples of Midland colour decoration at its best. Those at Handborough (39) are simply decorated in green and red on a white ground. No gold is used on the lower parts of the screen, for white takes its place on the fillets and other parts usually gilded. The trail along the head of the screen, however, is gilded and runs in a blue hollow; it is bounded by gold and black beads. The coving is blue, crossed by moulded ribs of red and white, while the bosses are gilded. At Charlton-on-Otmoor (32) the linen panels of the base are picked out in red and dark blue with a complete disregard of heraldic propriety. The vaulting panels, of a deep blue, are masked by a network of delicate gilded tracery, while the ribs have red hollows, white fillets, and a gold bead.

A few Midland screens received the traditional adornment of painted saints in their panels. These are generally of rather mediocre design. Such paintings as those of prophets on Monks Risborough screen possess no merit beyond quaintness and the charm of colour, and the almost defaced doctors of the Church and evangelistic symbols at Bloxham, though of exceptionally good design for the district, are of but moderate importance.

Besides screens, very little painted decoration has been preserved in the Midlands. There are a good number of roofs decorated in very subdued tints—white with black roses, as at Bledington, Gloucestershire, or with stars and wreaths of a brownish-red, as at Minster Lovell, Oxon. In the south aisle of the little church at Shilton, Oxon., there is a wall plate painted cream with a very effective painted trail of feathery foliage in dark red, and similar remains are not uncommon. A number of roofs were painted blue, studded with gold stars, like the repainted roofs of Holy Trinity, Coventry, where the sides of the deep cambered beams are decorated with kneeling figures of angels holding shields. Similar angel painting, happily unrestored, remains in the roof of Gawsworth (114), Cheshire. The pulpits of the district are almost all masquerading in coats of gaudy modern colour, while most of the font-covers have been scraped. The unusual survival of colour decoration on the interesting benches at Great Brington, Northants, deserves notice.

Colour Decoration in East Anglia.—East Anglian colour decoration is of a far higher order. Here the same love for red and green is found, but practically every available surface is enriched in some way with stencilling or brushwork. The coloured panels of the pulpits and screens are decorated with exquisitely designed powderings of gold devices, or with finely painted figures. The stencilled devices are of infinite variety, and include five-petalled flowers, roses, fleur-de-lys, sprays of foliage, monograms, eagles, pelicans, and other symbolic devices. Some of the more elaborate golden floral stencillings sprout out into black stalks, bearing little white flowers, as at Ranworth, while in some cases gold and black stencils are used alternately. The screens are specially noticeable for the beauty of the skilful brushwork foliage which decorates the white hollows of the mouldings and the sides of the buttresses. The flowers which these bear are usually stencilled in red, but the stalks and leaves are generally applied freehand with a brush, in a thick brownish-green paint, so that they are in slight relief. A cornflower, with a blue bloom, having a square gold centre, and foliage of red-brown, is also common. Rather coarsely executed versions of the dog rose and the speedwell are found at Tunstead, where the flower-painting, though rough, is in great variety.

At Southwold, green sprays with gilded pomegranates of gesso are found. At Ranworth the lovely device of the over-and-over leaf trail in dark green and red is employed in connection with little gilded wooden pateræ or stencilled poppies of scarlet. The ogee mouldings are generally treated with a wave of red or green on white. Each lobe of the colour has its little golden flower, while the white lobes have sprays of foliage, or red flowers with green leaves. A blue ogee with alternate roses and fleurs-de-lys of gold is employed in the screen at Bramfield (266). In East Anglia the fillets are usually gold, except those of the tracery, which are commonly painted red and green in alternate panels, the cusps springing from a cream hollow, and having red or green eyes, counterchanged. The delicate hanging foliation of the arches of Cawston and similar screens is entirely gilded. Black letter inscriptions, charmingly written and enriched with flourishes and dainty flowerwork in the spaces, are a usual feature occurring in the Burlingham pulpit, and in the hollow of the rail of the screen at Attleborough. At Long Melford a large twisted parchment, inscribed with an original devotional poem of extraordinary length, is the somewhat uncommon ornament of the roof cornice. The sides of the little buttresses of the standards of eastern screens are often painted with sprays of foliage of even greater elaboration than those which occur in the mouldings. At Marsham and Trimingham these are of a purple colour, without flowers, while those of the screen at Bramfield (266) are really wonderful instances of floral decoration. The fronts of the buttresses in the earlier screens are usually gold, while the later examples are often decorated with delicate patterns in the raised plasterwork, known as gesso, which is invariably gilded. Vaulting panels are generally blue, with the usual powdering of gold stars, but at Bramfield each blue panel has a little golden angel, outlined in black. In the exceptionally elaborate painting of the vault at Ranworth, the panels are white, with wonderful sprays of foliage. The beams supporting the lofts generally have the beads of their mouldings decorated with a barber's pole of black and gold, with the usual wave treatment on the ogees. In most cases there is also a gold cresting running in a blue hollow.



SEFTON CHURCH, LANCS., EARLY 16th CENTURY WORK.

Gold is much more lavishly used in East Anglia than in other parts of the country, and the general effect is far richer. Although the same series of colours is used in practically every example, they are blended in different proportions. For instance, Ludham is a pre-eminently gold-and-red screen, while at Ranworth lovely soft green and vermilions are about equally balanced.

The saints painted in the panels of the screens and pulpits of this wonderful district are, many of them, real works of genius, very far in advance of the quaint daubing of the Midlands or the artless efforts of Devon. The level of attainment is by no means equal. The figures on the Suffolk screens of Yaxley and Eye (60) are of very indifferent workmanship, though they fit well enough into the general scheme of decoration, but those of Ranworth, Hunstanton (60), and Thornham, mannered as they are, are works of real skill. The faces are delicately drawn, the figures are well proportioned and supremely decorative, while their golden robes are exquisitely diapered with the finest damask patterns, evidently copied from real fabrics. The decorative accessories, including the symbols carried by the figures—swords, keys, boats, crowns, crosiers—are charmingly conventionalised. The nine orders of angels, painted in the blue panels of the north aisle screen at Southwold, are even more decorative. Their huge gold wings and delicious garments, decorated with jewels, bells, and pomegranates, and the symbols by which the various orders are distinguished, are wonderfully effective, and the faces are refined and beautiful. Barton Turf has a similar series, with beautiful and mysteriously vested figures, marred only by the extraordinary size of their bare feet. These paintings are intentionally flat and conventional in treatment, but in many screens, notably at Cawston and on the main screen at Southwold, the figures are treated more or less naturalistically, very much in the style of Dürer, with heavily modelled drapery and easy, though sometimes exaggerated, poses, and very expressive faces. These figures are only kept in their place in the colour scheme by their heavily gessoed backgrounds. At Cawston the flower painting behind the figures is exceptionally fine and varied. Besides all this fine work there is a good deal of very poor stuff indeed, such as the laughable kings on the screen in the aisle of Barton Turf. The screen paintings at Loddon deserve special notice, for they consist of scenes comprising several figures. The technique is also different, for, instead of being treated as an oil painting pure and simple, these scenes are drawn in a strong black outline, very firmly and decidedly, evidently by a hand used to the design of stained glass.

Besides screens, many pulpits, font-covers, and other articles of church furniture in the East Anglian churches have escaped scraping or restoration. The lovely pulpit of South Creake is now ruined with drab paint, but one side once fixed against a pier has escaped the muddy coating, and glows with blue panels and white and gold tracery. The famous Burlingham pulpit is a lovely example of red and green counterchange, and its black-lettered scroll is a good example of the decorative use of lettering. The seated doctors of the Church on the Burnham north pulpit (287) are only fair specimens of mediæval figure work, but the decorative powderings at Castle Acre (279) are of dainty design. The colour of the font-cover at Castle Acre is now coming to light as the modern paint flakes off. It was an extremely fine example of red and green counterchange, with gilded buttress fronts and powderings. The little vault has the usual blue panels and ribs with white hollows and gold beads, separated by red fillets. Ufford font-cover (46) has been much restored, and the colour is only partly genuine, but the original effect must have been magnificent.

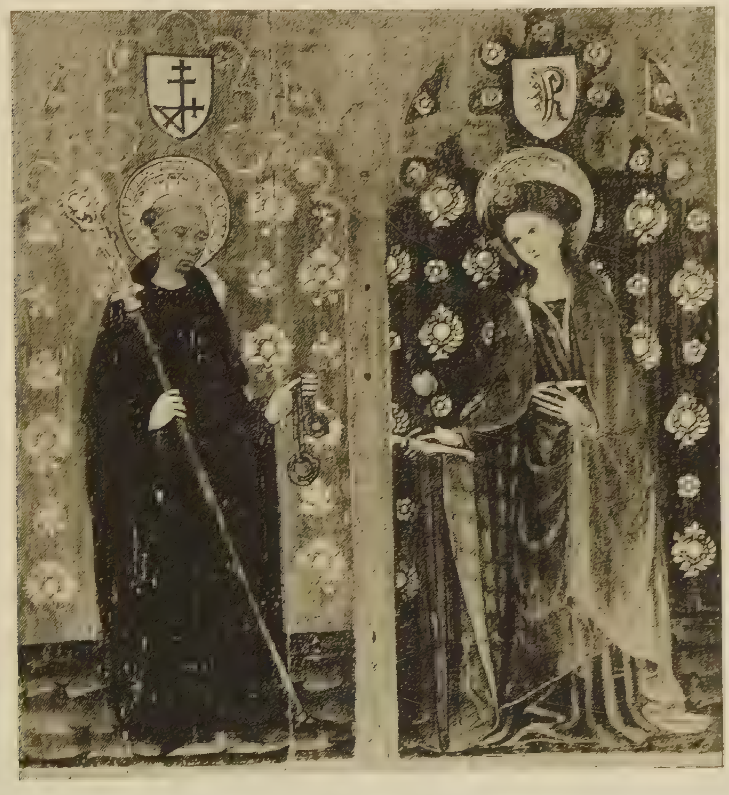
In no other district was colour decoration so commonly applied to roofs. In most cases the rafters are exposed, and are equal in width to the spaces between them, and the scheme often employed is reminiscent of the embroidered altar frontals of the period. Thus, at Blythburgh (115) the spaces are red with black roses, while the rafters are white with green foliage springing from red monograms of the Holy Name, alternated with similar foliage framing the letter *i*. At Ufford (125) the spaces are red and the rafters are white, decorated with the monogram IHC and M alternated and counterchanged. At Palgrave, on the other hand, both rafters and spaces are white, but the sides of the rafters are red. The spaces are decorated with red fiery stars, while the rafters are emphasised by roses and tracery in grey. There are no devices on the rafters or panels of the fine roof at Knapton, where the whole undersurface of the roof is painted yellow, with red sides to the rafters. At Long Melford the blue starry sky motive is employed, in conjunction with red rafters, having parchment scrolls with a black letter motto. Sall has white rafters and spaces with extremely beautiful foliated monograms in red ; the sides of the rafters are also red. The moulding of the timbers of the principals and purlins were picked out after the manner of those of the screen, but gold was very rarely used. Barber's poling, generally of black and white, and series of chevrons of contrasting tints, are very freely used. The spandrels are often painted with conventional foliage, very difficult to distinguish from actual carving, while ingenious tracery patterns sometimes occur in this position. The angels, which are so striking a feature of the East Anglian roofs, are generally in red dresses, with green wings, or vice versa, and have yellow crowns and white amices ; this use of yellow instead of gold is very usual in roof painting. The flat panelled roofs must also be noted, such as that of Bury St Edmund's, where the white ground is divided into lozenges with green twisted foliage, each containing a red monogram within a black garter. Every panel is crossed by an elaborately illuminated scroll, running from corner to corner. At St John Maddermarket, Norwich, each panel of the south aisle roof has a finely painted angel, elaborately vested, with delightful feathery wings, surrounded with a wreath of foliage, which throws off elaborate and naturalistic sprays of foliage towards each corner. At St Stephen's the more usual scheme is adopted of a monogram, in this case a T, within a torse or twisted wreath. The painting is in green, and appears to be done on the bare oak.

Colour Decoration in the West Country.—In the west country colour decoration does not often rise to the high standard of the eastern counties, but it easily surpasses that of the Midlands. Some of the screens are extraordinarily beautiful in colour. They are usually so encrusted with carving that there is no painted enrichment. It was sufficient to pick out the mouldings and the various details of the carving with colour or gold. Generally the colours are heavier and not so pure and bright as those employed in East Anglia, and white is very little used. Blue is very rare, occurring only in the hollows of the over-and-over trail decorating the framework and behind the trails. Red and gold, and above all green, are the favourite colours. The screen at Bridford (45), however, has a lovely colour scheme in which green, blue, and gold predominate, while that at Kentisbere (210) is decorated in several shades of red, in conjunction with gold, silver, and bronze.

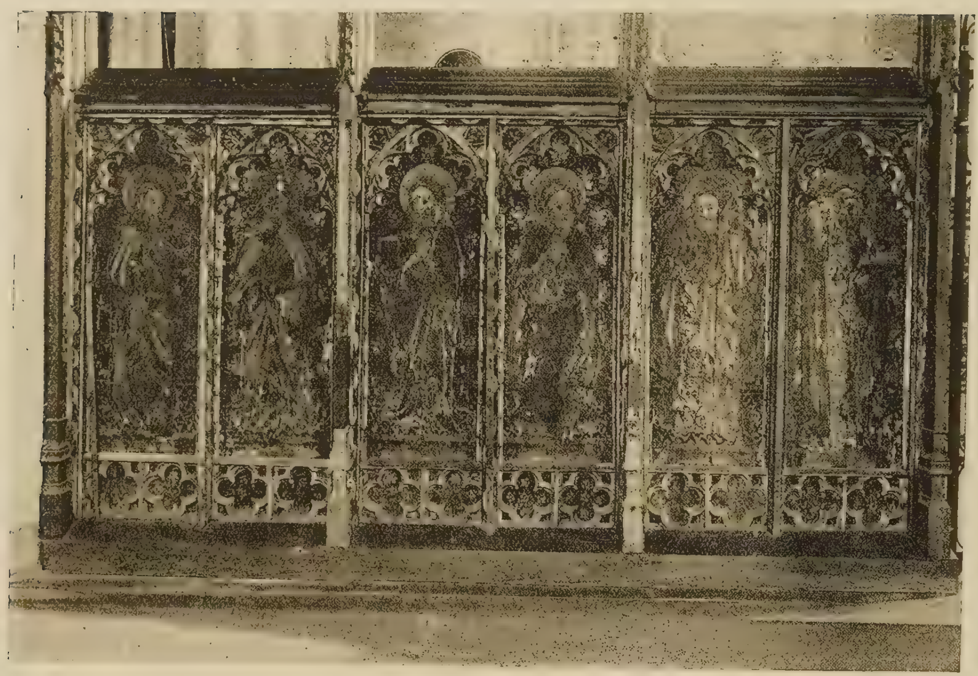
The majority of the Devon screens have quaint paintings of saints in their panels. These never rise to the level of works of art, though they are most amusing and interesting. The most successful from the decorative point of view are the series of alternate prophets and apostles bearing scrolls, which occur in many churches, of which Chudleigh and Ipplepen are examples, rather different in treatment. In the former case the scrolls are wide and are at the base of each panel, while in the latter the scrolls are carried by the figures. The finest specimens of all, full of charm and drawn with the sure touch of a master, are those in the lady chapel screen at Ashton (61). These panels are approximately square, and have figures in white robes, heavily shaded in grey, on a background of soft vermilion. The scrolls, which are very skilfully drawn, have black lettering with red flourishes. The subjects include a charming Annunciation and Visitation, together with several half-length prophets. The saints at Kenn are chiefly interesting from the point of view of the archæologist. Nowhere else is the selection of saints so interesting. But many of these west country paintings are mere daubs, in no way worthy of the magnificent carving of the screen they are intended to decorate, though they possess a charm, due chiefly to their antiquity. A particularly unpleasant feature, marring even the charming series of saints on the west side of the screen at Ashton, is that owing to the shape of the panels the figures are either unduly short and dumpy, or are cut off short at the knee.

Beyond the coloured screens there is little original colour decoration in this district. Most of the pulpits, for instance, have been repainted, as at Ipplepen (295), and have consequently been spoilt, but at Cockington (295) the effect of the blue panels, rent by streaks of lightning (probably the conceit of a post-Reformation painter employed to deface paintings of the saints), is really charming. There is a good deal of gold on the framework and the canopies, which have their cherubs quaintly tinted in the hues of nature.

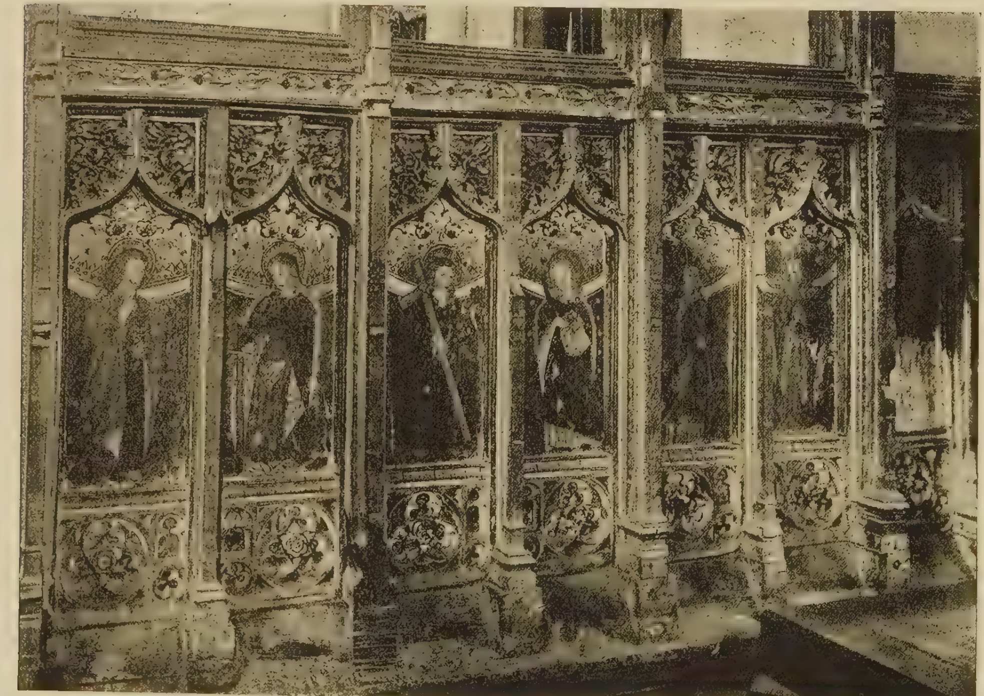
Roof decoration was generally confined to the bay over the rood-loft, where the scheme usually employed is blue panels with gold stars, and mouldings picked out in gold and red, as at Hennock. A golden cresting generally fringes the panels. At Cullompton, by exception, this treatment is applied to the whole of the nave roof with an extremely magnificent result. The flat aisle roofs of this church have rather unusual colour decoration. Each of the triangular panels is edged with a painted border, suggesting a carved cresting.



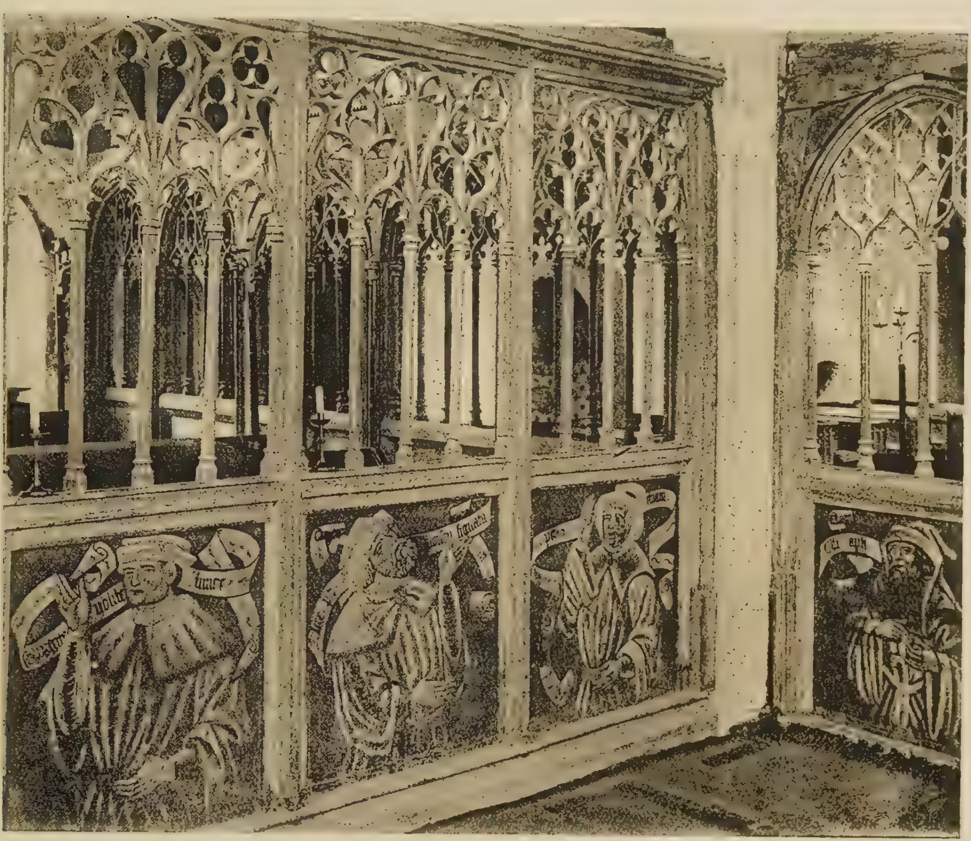
ST JOHN MADDERMARKET, NORWICH
PANELS FROM SCREEN. FIFTEENTH CENTURY
(Now in Victoria and Albert Museum)



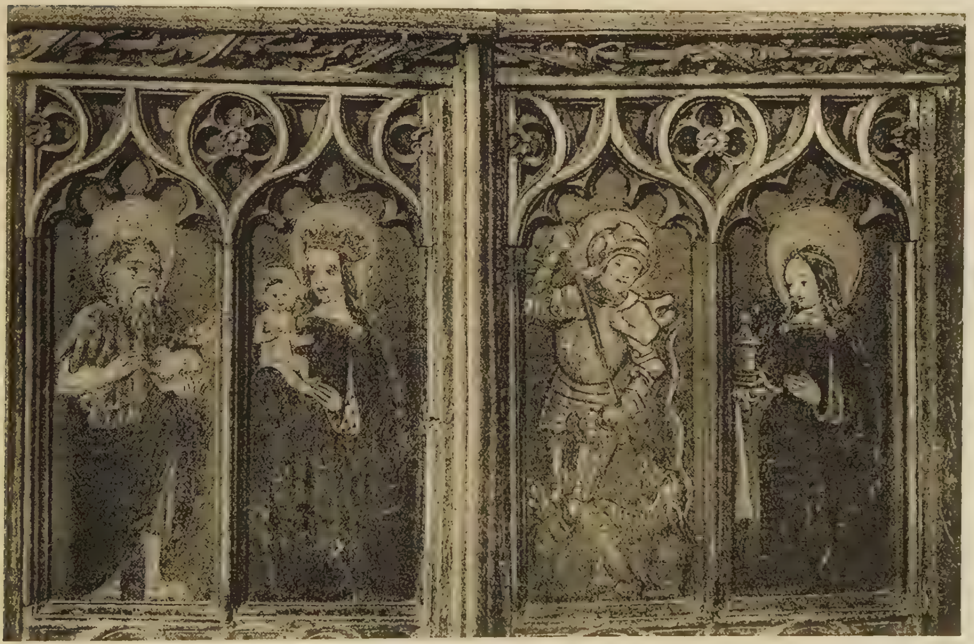
HUNSTANTON, NORFOLK, SPLENDID CONVENTIONAL DESIGN



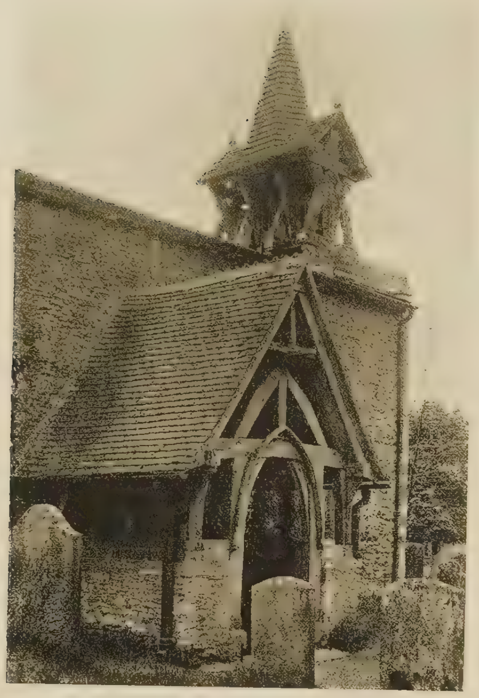
EYE, SUFFOLK, RUDE AND PRIMITIVE TYPE



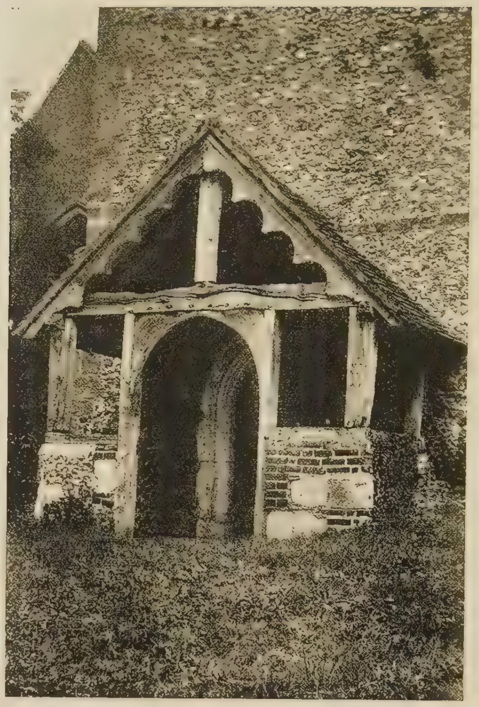
ASHTON, DEVON, SKILFUL CONVENTIONAL DESIGN



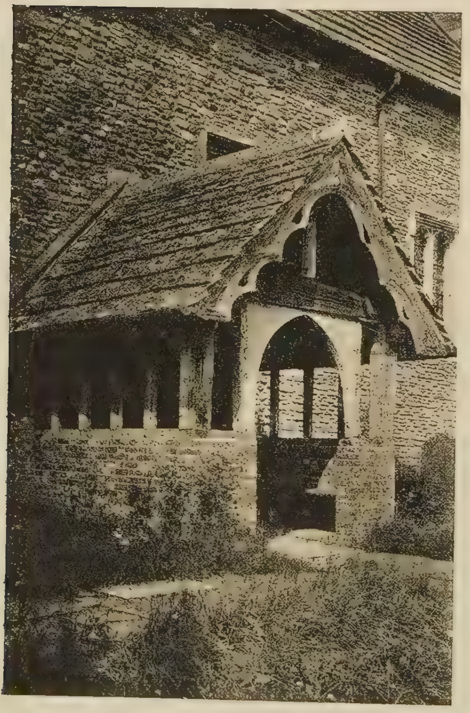
ASHTON, DEVON, CHARMING BUT PRIMITIVE TYPE



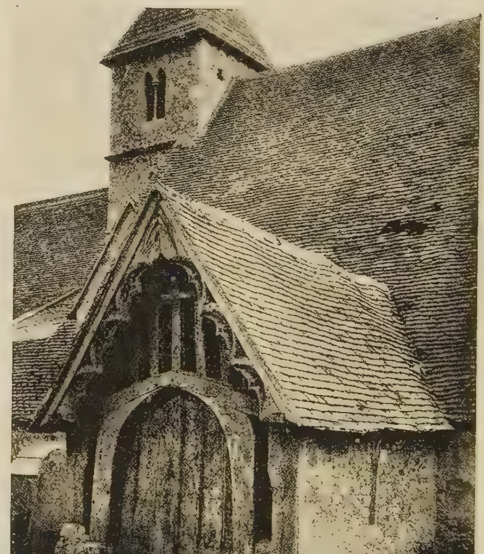
SALFORD, BEDS.,
THIRTEENTH CENTURY



WEST HORSLEY, SUSSEX,
FOURTEENTH CENTURY



SHIPLEY SUSSEX,
FOURTEENTH CENTURY



WARBLINGTON, HANTS,
MID-FOURTEENTH CENTURY

II

STRUCTURAL WOODWORK

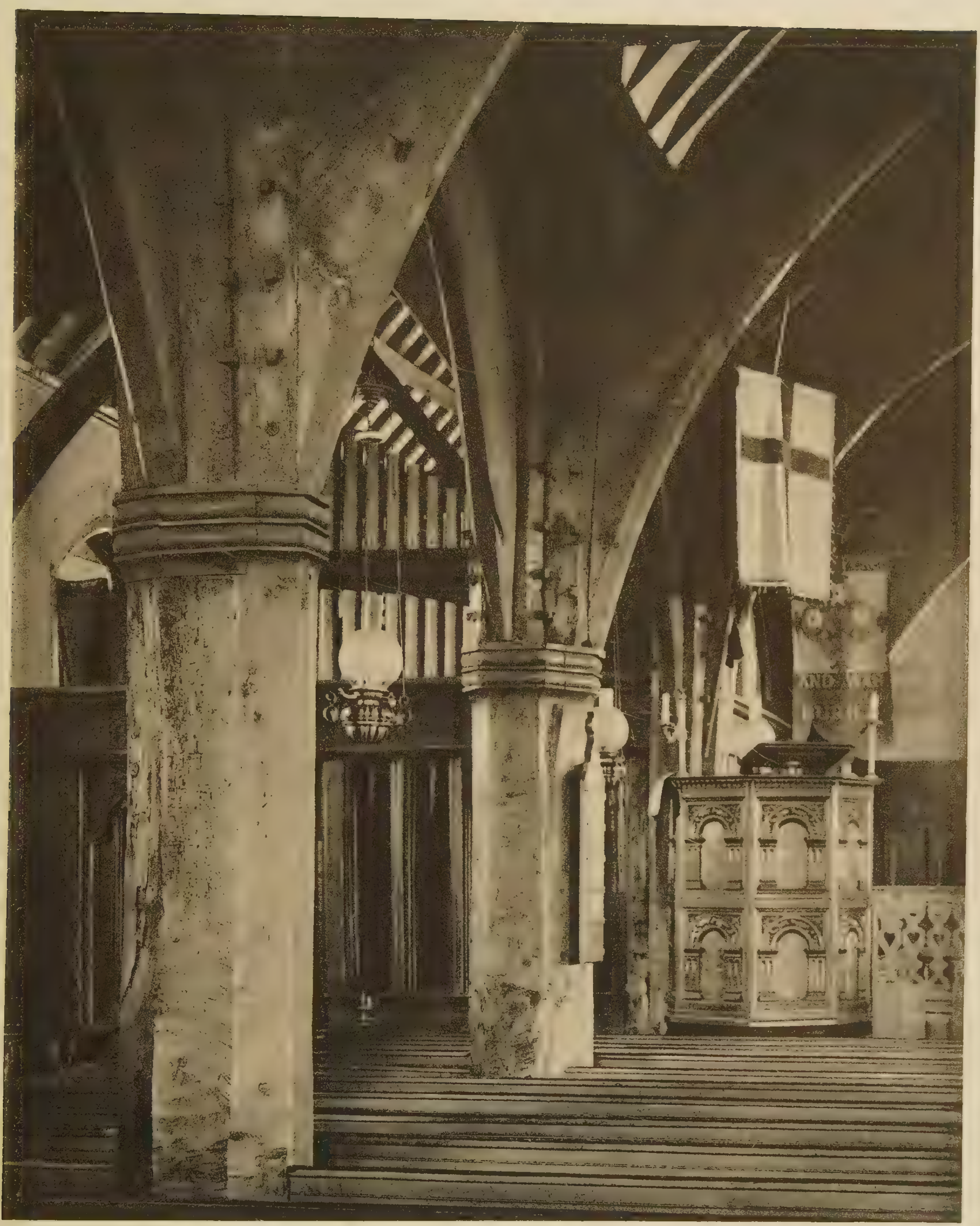
TIMBER PORCHES

THE great majority of mediæval porches were built of masonry, but timber-work was occasionally employed in many parts of the country, especially where there was no good local building stone. In the south-eastern counties the common occurrence of timber porches is a striking peculiarity of the local type of parish church. Oddly enough, there are no timber porches in the south-western counties, where it would be reasonable to expect to find good examples, seeing that the local stone is poor, and that timber is lavishly used in the rest of the fabric. Naturally, they do not occur in the Cotswolds, Lincoln, or Yorks., or in other districts where the walls of the churches are commonly faced with ashlar. Timber porches are very widely distributed, but the type is remarkably constant all over the country.

The oldest porches are of the thirteenth century, and may be distinguished by the great size of their timbers, which are very roughly hewn and seldom moulded, and by the almost entire absence of carving. Salford, Beds. (62), is a characteristic example. The arch is usually formed by two enormously wide timbers, so that the jamb and half the arch are cut from the same great oak. The side walls have generally disappeared. It seems likely that they were of very simple but strong timber framing, with little or no ornament.

Sometimes, particularly in Sussex, the side walls are now of stonework, but it is difficult to tell whether this is the original arrangement, or whether the original timber-work has perished.

Carved barge-boards add greatly to the beauty and interest of the fourteenth-century porches. The earliest are very simply cusped, as at Marsh Baldon (68), but as time went on they were elaborated. Double foliation occurs at Shipley, Sussex (62). The foils are traceried at Warblington, Hants (62), an ogee foil is introduced at the apex of the barge-board at Ewhurst, Surrey (70), and West Horsley, Sussex (62), and all the foils are ogee-shaped and elaborately cusped at Long Wittenham, Berks. (68). The carving of the actual surface of the barge-board was not attempted till the very end of the century, when it is found in the beautiful porch of High Halden, Kent (67). Greater attention was also paid to the design of the side framing, which was designed after the manner of the screens of the period, with bands of tracery grooved into the head, and supported on a series of turned shafts, or moulded mullions. In plain examples, however, the tracery was omitted, as at Long Wittenham, Berks. (68), where the sides are filled in with a series of closely-spaced square shafts, with moulded caps, bases, and bands (an arrangement obscured by the insertion of a modern travesty of tracery), or at North Stoke, Oxon, where there are simple chamfered uprights. The influence of masonry design is very strongly marked in the elaborate porch of Boxford, Suffolk, which is perhaps the most ornate porch of the fourteenth century now remaining. There are great two-light windows with acutely-pointed arches and graceful curvilinear tracery in the sides, the uprights are reinforced with timber buttresses, those against the front angles being placed diagonally, and the mouldings of the jambs and arch of the doorway are entirely masonic in inspiration. Clustered shafts are employed within to receive the arch braces of the roof timbers and the hood-moulds of the windows. No more remarkable timber porch can be found anywhere in England, but a parallel instance of masonic influence in the fifteenth century occurs at Ewelme (67), where the doorway and windows are provided with wooden hood-moulds, hewn out of the solid timber.



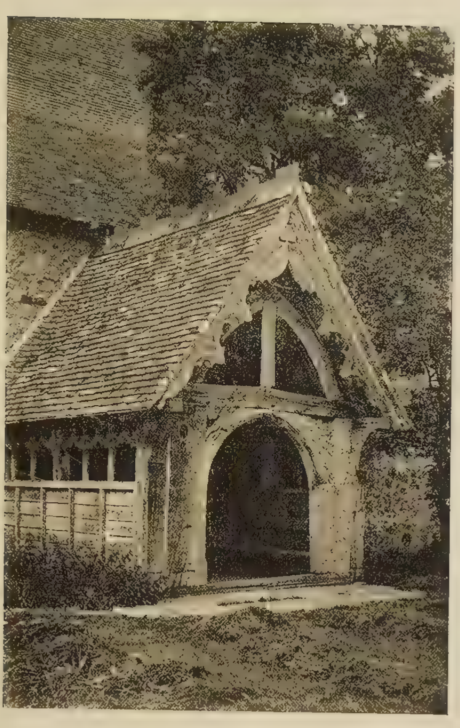
LOWER PEOVER CHURCH, CHESHIRE, 16TH CENTURY.

The fifteenth-century porches are mostly of delightful design, and carving is more freely used in their decoration. By this time the primitive method of constructing the archway of two timbers only had gone out of use, and in most cases the arch is formed by arch braces, framed into the jambs and lintel, as at West Grinstead, Sussex, but the old method is still found in the Burstall porch (69). Another type of archway is seen at Huddington, Worcester (71), where the arch is of a graceful ogee form; the upper part is cut out of the lintel, while the lower sections are formed out of the jambs. The barge-boards are usually finely cusped and traceried, one of the loveliest, though by no means the most elaborate, being that of the porch at West Challow, Berks. (69). The treatment of the front gable, which had been left open, exposing the roof timbers in most of the older porches, was taken in hand by the fifteenth-century carpenters, who filled it in with panelling. Elaborate examples may be found at Llanrhaiadr, Denbigh (71), and Burstall, Suffolk (69). Some of the later fifteenth-century porches have flat roofs of lead, as at Hagbourne, Berks., and Dorchester, Oxon. They are not nearly so attractive as those with pitched roofs. Little Hampden, Bucks., has a very pretty timber porch with an upper story, very simply worked, and domestic in feeling; it is of uncertain date.

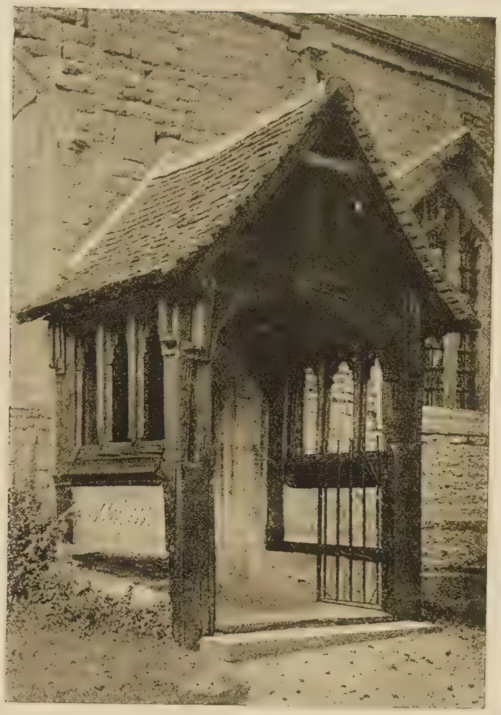
There are a few charming pentice porches, in which the roof is borne on brackets, instead of posts, of which that on the north side of St Nicholas, King's Lynn, is one of the most carefully designed. It is of low pitch, covered with lead, and the timbers are well moulded.

The construction of the mediæval timber porches is very simple. They are raised on a low plinth of masonry. The front and back frames are complete in themselves, and the sides are framed in between them, the head running through the back frame into the wall of the church, and through the front frame to take the barge-board. In many cases the sides are entirely of timber, and a rail is introduced about four feet above the ground. The framing below this rail is filled with wattle and plaster, with brickwork, or with thin wood panels, while the upper part is left open in the form of windows. In other cases the stonework is carried up to the sill of the side windows, or the sides may be entirely of stone. A curious porch exists at

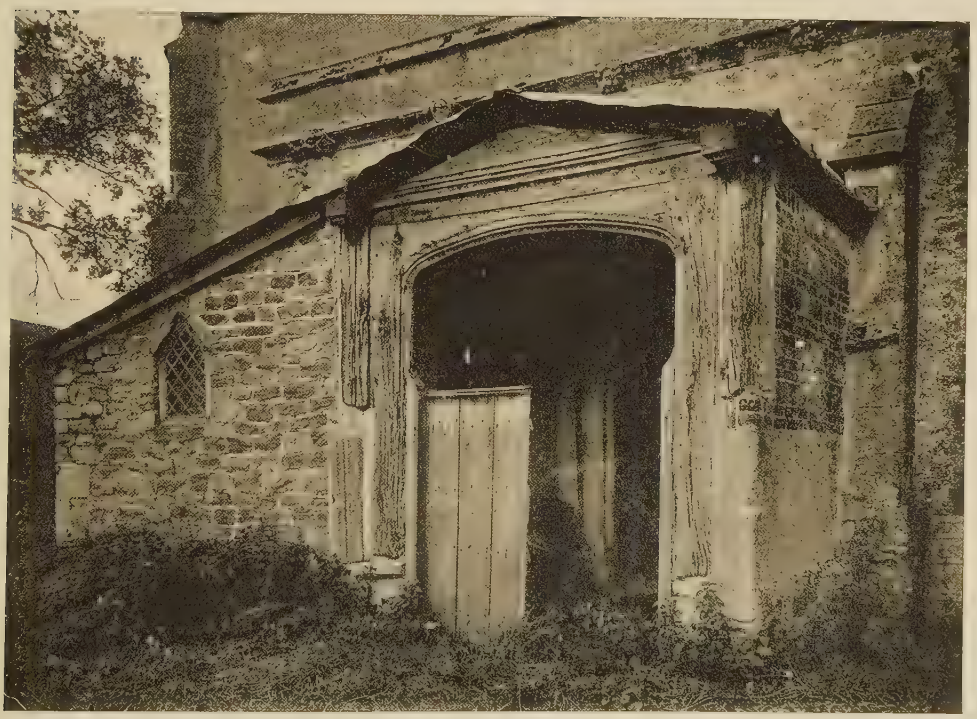
Cassington, Oxon., whose front wall is of stone, while the upper half of the sides is of timber framing. The heads of the front and back frames are generally very deep, and are notched over the side frames; they are usually much cambered. In the south-eastern and eastern counties the porches are rather wide, and often have openings on either side of the archway, as at Burstall (69) and West Horsley (62), but in the Midland counties they are seldom wide enough to need this treatment. In Oxfordshire and Berks. the front frame is often made out to the required width by the addition of outer posts, as at Challow (69) and Marsh Baldon (68). In some very small examples the archway with its wide jambs occupies the whole width of the front. The problem of roofing was a very simple one, since most timber porches are small. Generally a king-post was framed into the front and back lintels, to carry a purlin, which was usually arranged to support the collars of the common rafters. These rarely needed any intermediate support except in very deep porches, such as that of High Halden (67), which is planned in two bays, with a principal between them. Usually the purlin is supported by longitudinal braces, which prevent the sagging of the purlin and the racking of the rafters in a forward or backward direction. The roofs of the porches at Hagbourne (67) are very simple and well-wrought examples of the firred beam type. At Ewhurst (70), West Grinstead (70), and other churches in the south-eastern counties, very flat roofs, covered with thick Horsham slabs, are common. This is the most striking local peculiarity in the design of timber porches that has been remarked. Some of the later porches show a decorative treatment of the front gable. At Benfleet, Essex, it is filled up with a timber framework of moulded and buttressed muntins and an embattled rail, while the panels are filled in with boards and are traceried, and a similar treatment occurs at West Grinstead. At Burstall the panels are plastered, and the centre upright has a pretty carved niche, now much decayed. The treatment at Llanrhaiadr is even more elaborate; all the timbers are very richly moulded and the uprights are traceried, while a niche, flanked with applied buttresses with a projecting canopy, now renewed, occupies the centre panel.



HIGH HALDEN, KENT,
LATE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

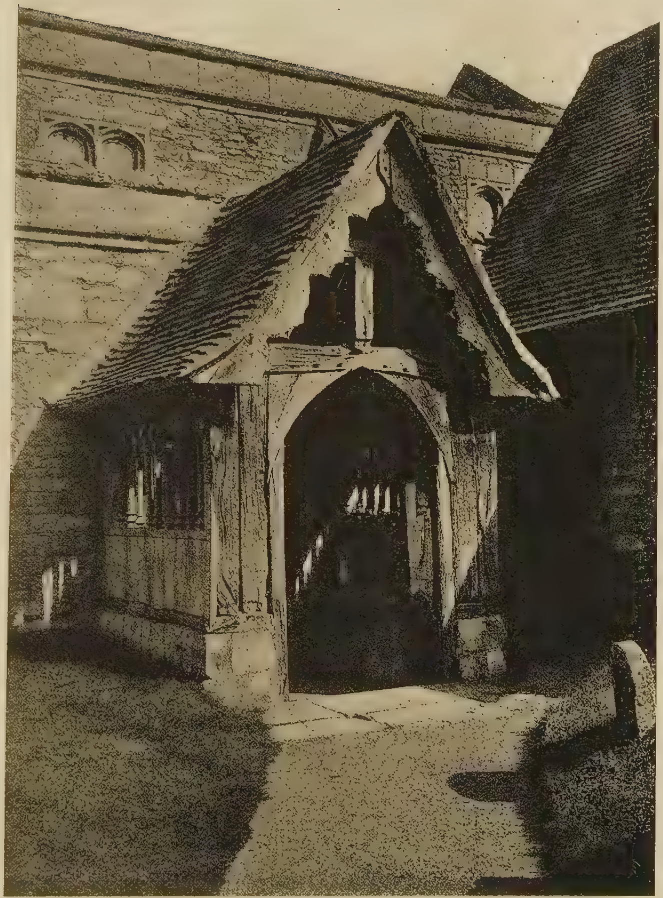


EWELME, OXON,
MID-FIFTEENTH CENTURY

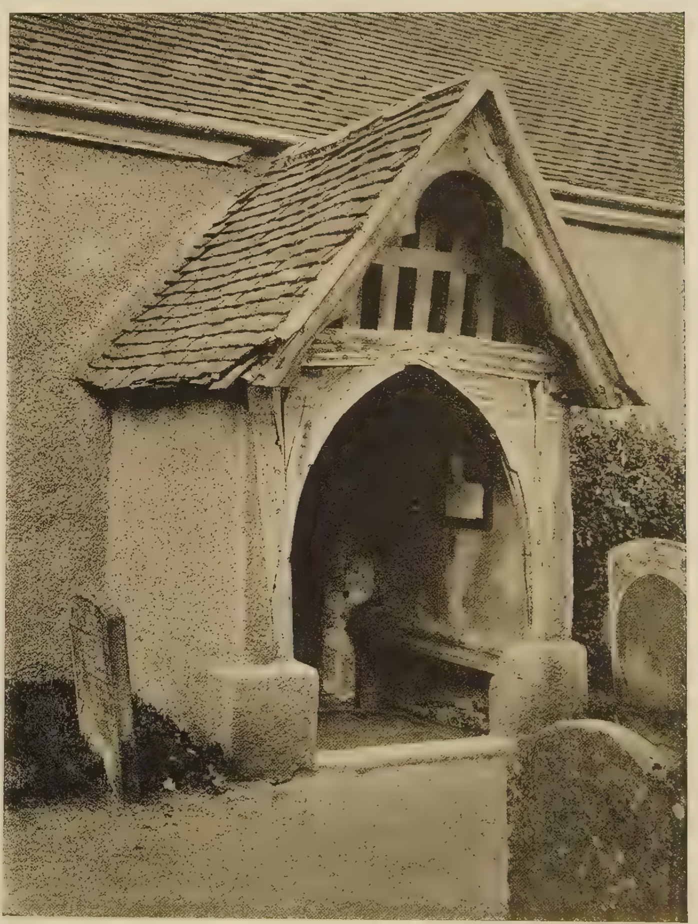


EAST HAGBOURNE, BERKS., LATE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

FOURTEENTH-CENTURY DESIGN

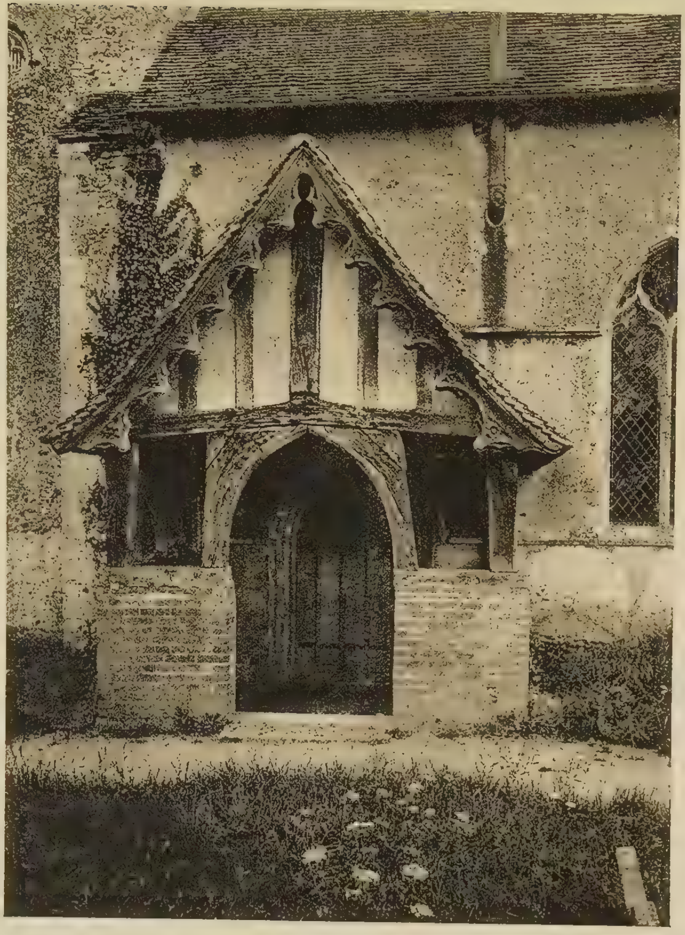


LONG WITTENHAM, BERKS., FOURTEENTH CENTURY

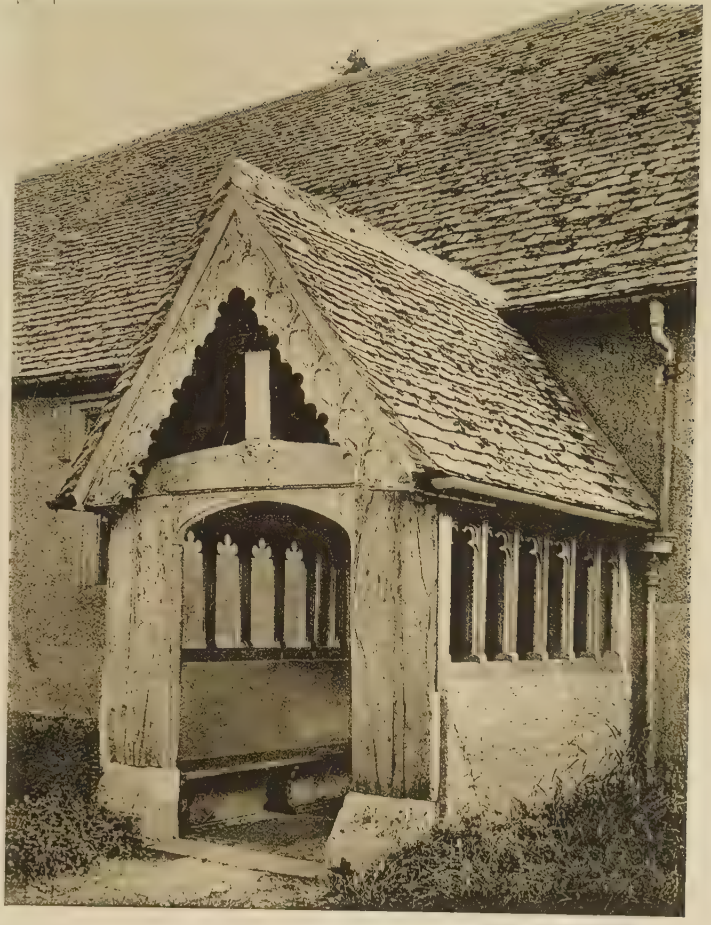


MARSH BALDON, OXON, FOURTEENTH CENTURY

FIFTEENTH-CENTURY DESIGN

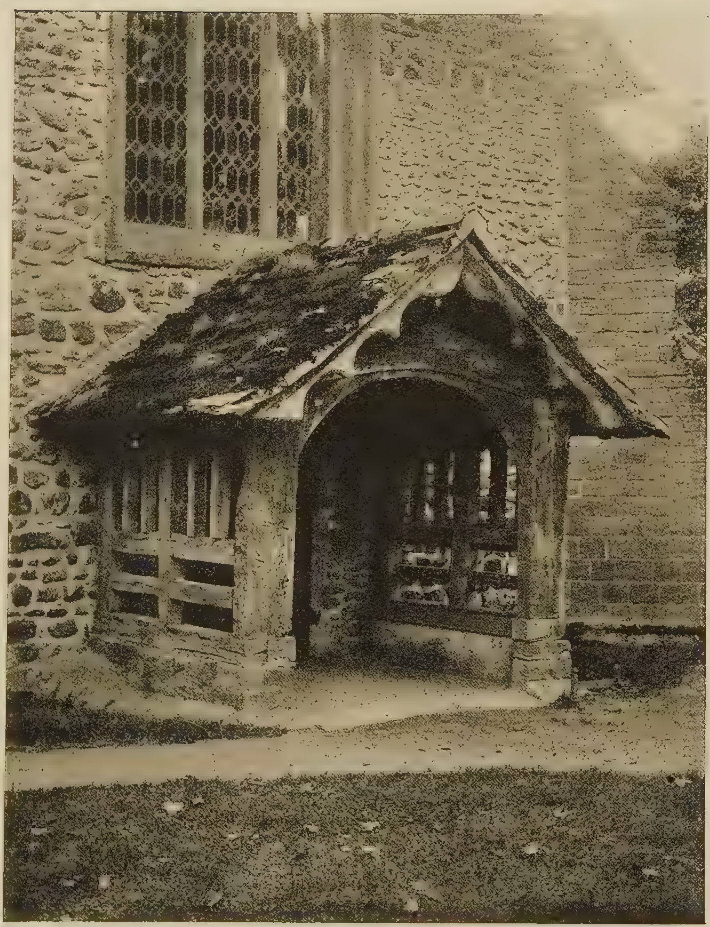


BURSTALL, SUFFOLK, RESTORED FIFTEENTH CENTURY

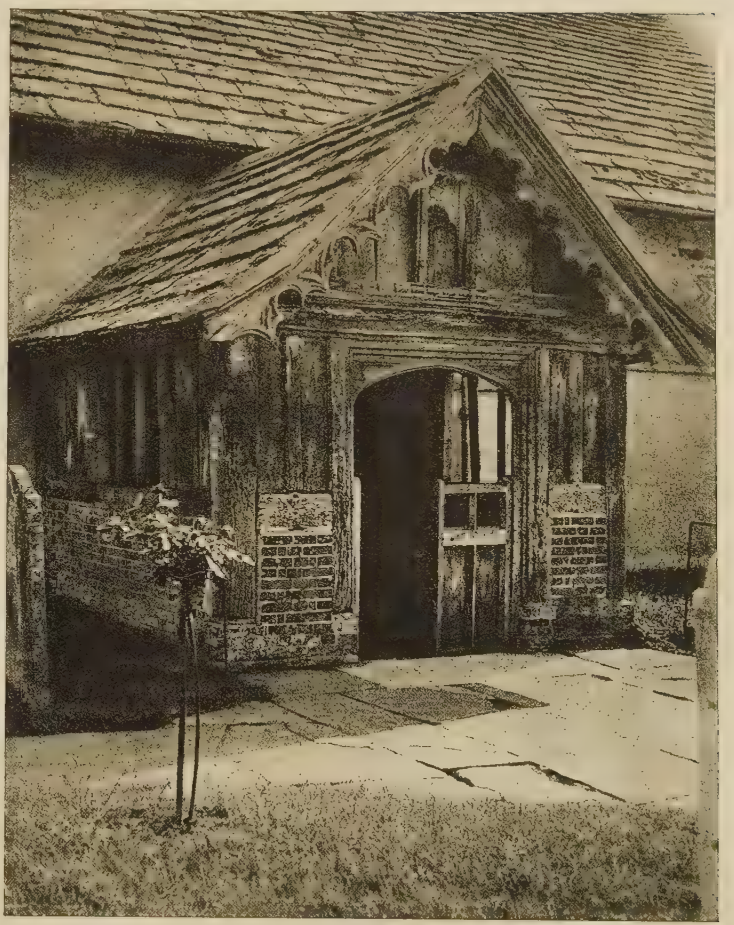


WEST CHALLOW, BERKS., FIFTEENTH CENTURY

PORCHES WITH LOW-PITCHED ROOFS—SOUTH-EASTERN TYPE

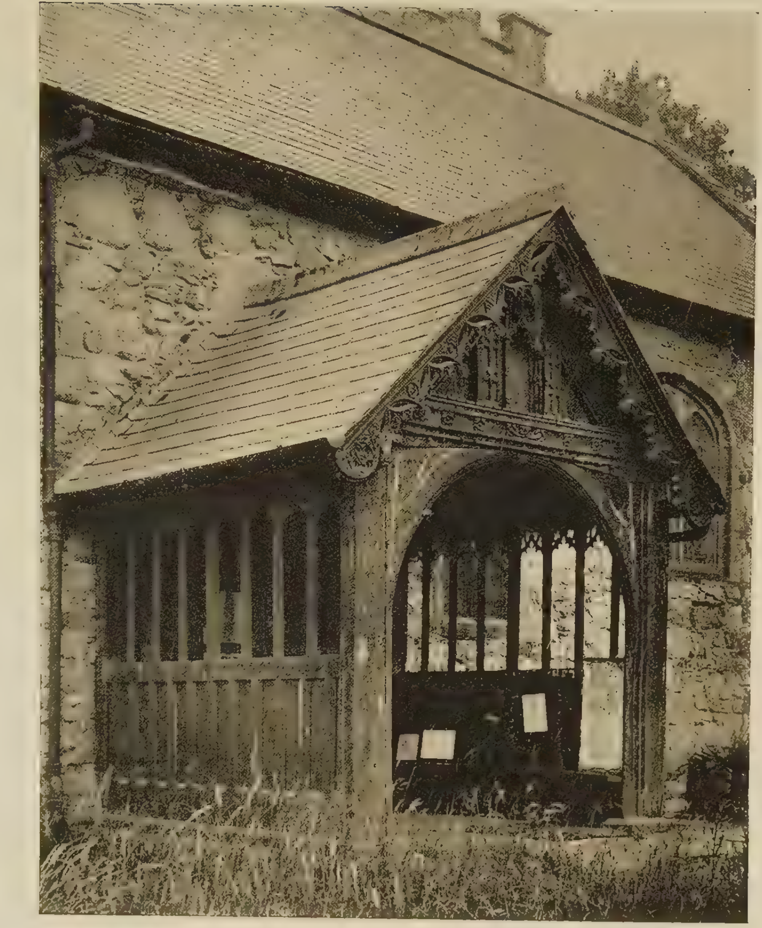


EWHURST, SURREY, FOURTEENTH CENTURY

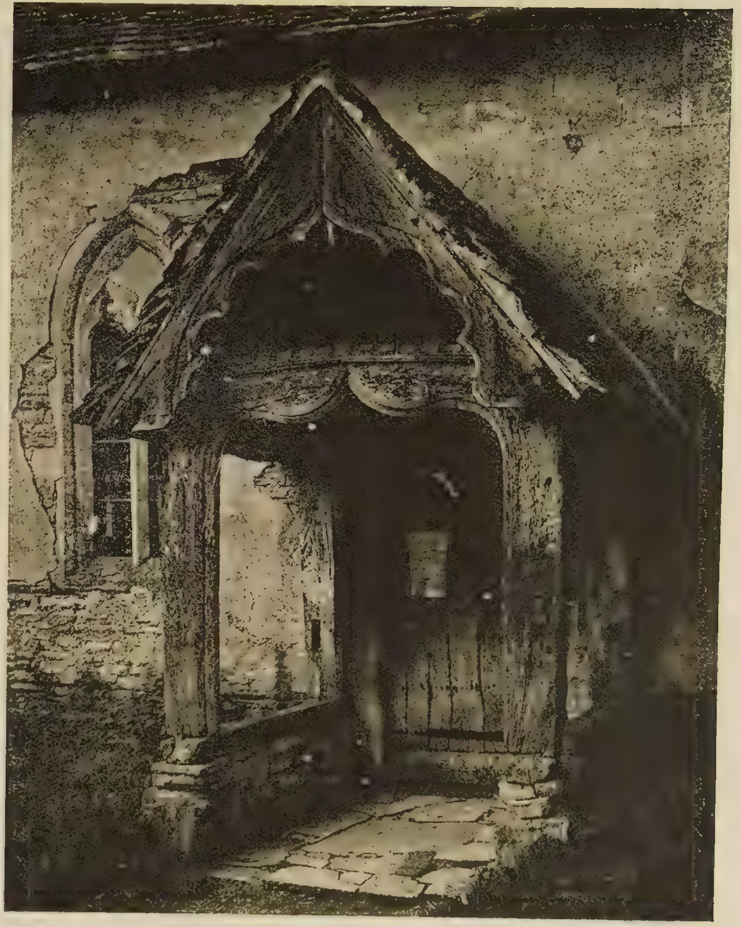


WEST GRINSTEAD, SUSSEX, FIFTEENTH CENTURY

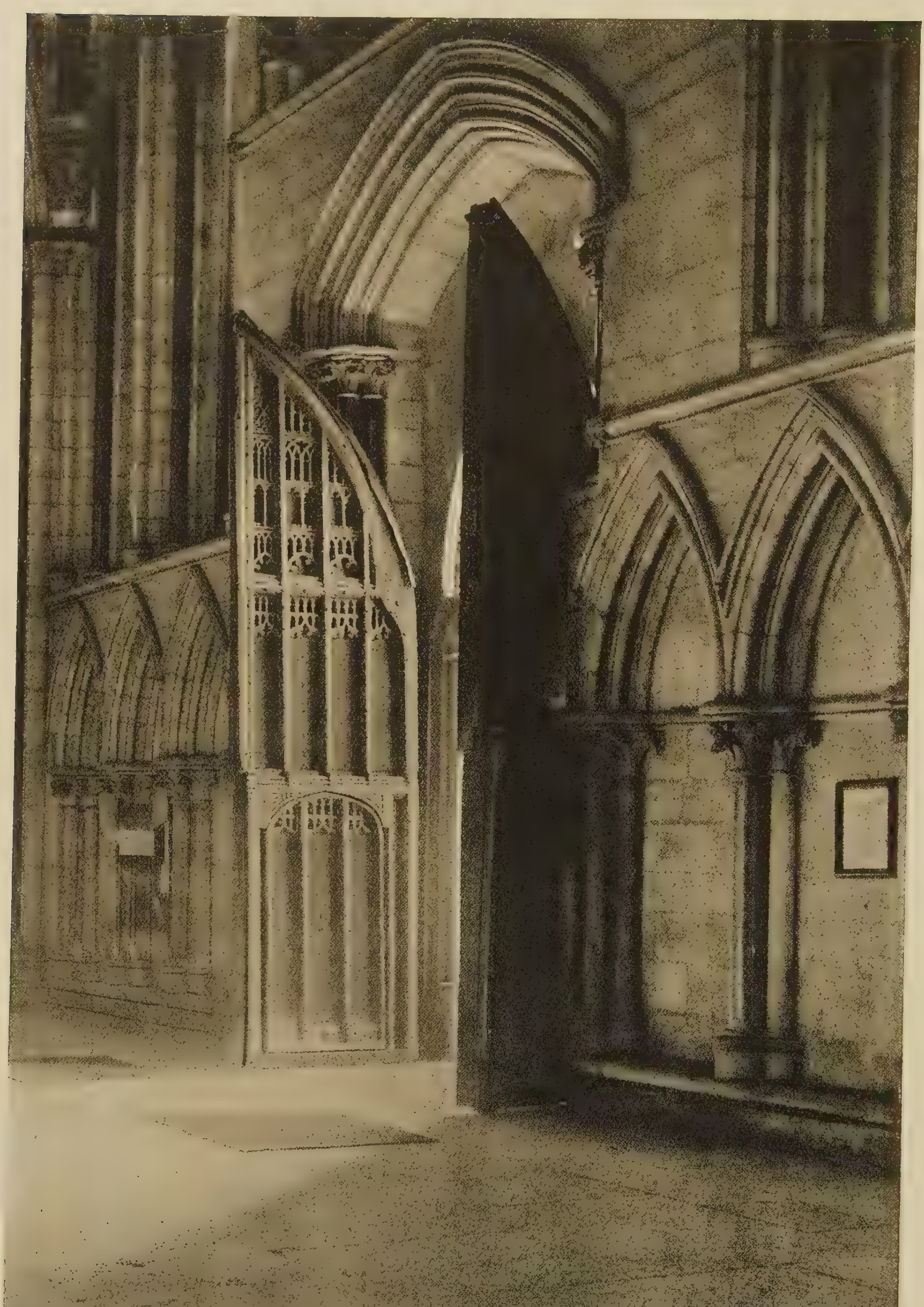
FIFTEENTH-CENTURY PORCHES—FROM THE WEST



LLANRHAIADR, DENBIGH, RESTORED FIFTEENTH CENTURY



HUDDINGTON, WORCS., FIFTEENTH CENTURY



YORK MINSTER, SOUTH TRANSEPT

DOORS

Mediæval doors were generally built up of two thicknesses of boarding, the inner layer horizontal and the outer vertical, nailed together with a profusion of great wrought iron nails with ornamental heads, whose points were driven right through and turned over on the inside. An alternative method, not so commonly employed, was to make an inner frame and cover it on the outside with vertical boards. These inner frames were often composed of styles, bottom rail, and shaped head-pieces, strengthened by a series of horizontal rails, as at Ewelme. Another excellent method was to arrange the inner frame as a series of vertical and horizontal battens, crossing one another, halved at their intersections, and dovetailed into the surrounding members, as at Cumnor, Berks. Sometimes the system of battens was arranged diagonally, as at Bunbury (77), or was composed of vertical and diagonal members crossing one another, as at Magdalen College, Oxford, giving a more rigid door. No attempt was made to decorate the inner side of the door. Indeed, the closely spaced battens, studded with bolts and nails, were extremely decorative in themselves and needed no further beautification, but in the case of the boarded doors the absolutely plain inner surface forms a remarkable contrast to the richly carved outer side.

Until the middle of the fourteenth century the task of decorating the door was entrusted to the smith, whose skill at that time was phenomenal. He usually covered the unornamented boarded surface with the scrollwork of the hinges and straps, and sometimes added a surrounding border to strengthen the edges. There are many splendid examples of these ancient iron-bound doors still in existence, but they scarcely come under the heading of woodwork. In the fourteenth century the craft of the wood-worker made great strides, while that of the blacksmith deteriorated. The hinges were plainer and smaller, and did not cover the surface of the door so completely. Finally, the work of door-making passed into the hands of the wood-worker, but even to the last the influence of the smith can be traced in the primitive method of building the door up in layers with the aid of nails and other ironwork, where one would expect to find the framed construction with mortice and tenon joints which the carpenter employed in his other works.

The boards employed in door construction were always very wide, and the surface was rough and showed the marks of the tools. They were grooved and tongued together, and often feather-edged. The nails were large, with quaintly wrought heads, and were arranged in seemly rows or patterns. Sometimes the incised lines upon the boarding which guided the setting out are still visible, as in the door to the tower stairs at Beckley, Oxon. Such a door is a satisfying object, even when the hinges are mere straps, as at Barking, Suffolk (77), particularly when the closing ring is of good design and provided with a pierced rose.

The first step towards a decorative treatment in wood was the application of tracery, designed on the lines of a traceried window. There are some examples in which the whole of the door above the springing is covered with fine flowing tracery, planted on the boarding, springing from little mouldings, nailed on to cover the vertical joints. An admirable door of this kind is to be seen at Wellow, Somerset (80), where the tracery is cut out of horizontal boards. This method of construction may be compared with that of the Devon parclose screens. At Addlethorpe, Lincs. (80), there is a door of similar construction of the end of the fourteenth century, in which the lines of the tracery are rectilinear and the boards are vertical. This continued to be the recognised method of decorating doors in the west country down to the end of the fifteenth century. In these districts the tracery was cut out of very thick boards, and was generally richly moulded. Unless the tracery is very thick and strong it is very liable to be broken off, and in some small doors the tracery is cut out of the actual surface of the door, as at Ashbourne, Derby; Blewbury, Berks. (79), and Stogumber, Somerset. Little relief is possible with this method, and the effect is rather flat and tame.

In many doors the decoration is confined to an applied frame with moulded uprights, dividing the surface of the door into tall vertical panels, covering the joints of the boarding and helping to prevent draughts from the crack between the door and the stone doorway, as at Shotwick, Cheshire (78). The effect is remarkably satisfactory, and a good deal of variety of design is possible by modifying the spacing and mouldings of the frame. At Tattershall (82) the nail heads securing them to the actual door are often extremely decorative, and sometimes give the appearance of carved pateræ, such as occur in the lovely doors at Astbury, Cheshire (78). In East Anglia and elsewhere the surrounding frame was often carved with a series of quatrefoils or other tracery, or even with a running trail of foliage.

The applied frame tended to become deeper and bolder as time went on, and in the Midlands little tracery heads, carved out of thin boards, are grooved into them, after the manner of the screens of that district, as at Stratton-on-the-Fosse (2, *opp.* 3), a method also employed in the eastern counties, as at Norwich, St Lawrence (2, *opp.* 3), Tattershall, and in Wales, as at Llanynys (81). The tracery of each panel need not necessarily spring from the same level, and at Copdock, Suffolk (81), they are stepped up in a very charming manner.

The panels were generally left plain, but often they were brought up to a ridge, giving a pleasant variation of light and shade. Sometimes they were entirely traceried from the plinth upwards, as at Helmingham. The result is not entirely pleasing, unless with figures-monotonous appearance of the tracery is relieved by little niches the of saints, as in the grand doors of Stoke, Suffolk. This elaborate treatment is seen at its best in the magnificent south door of St Nicholas, King's Lynn (84), where the niches are of extremely fine design, and are wrought out of the solid.

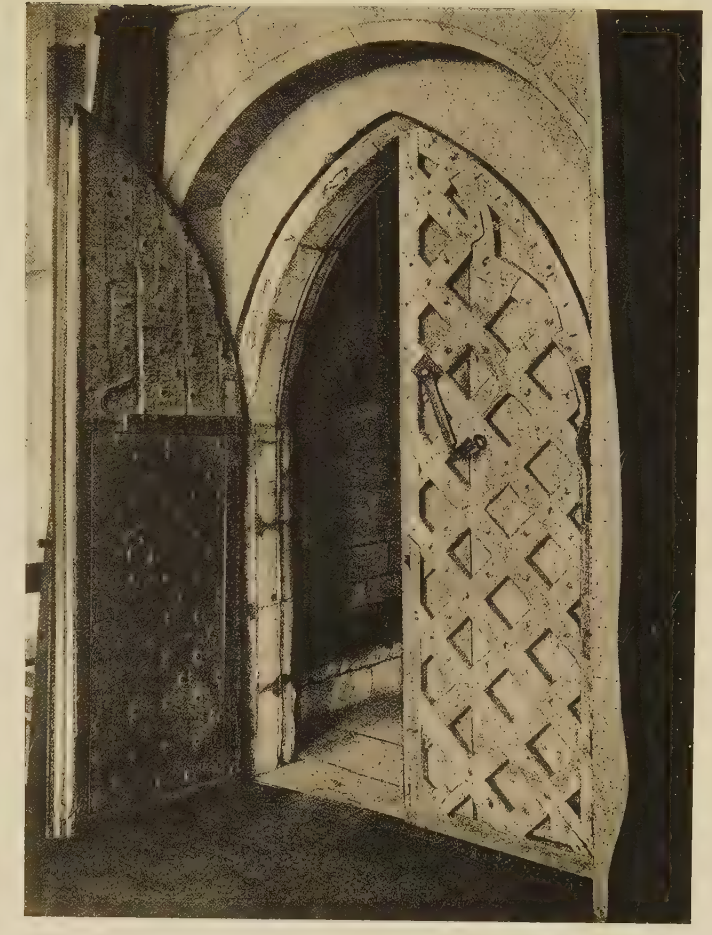
In some of the later doors curved members are added to the frame, giving a very fine effect, as in the grand doors, unhappily discarded, at Winthorpe (83). In the East the tracery sometimes has a crocketed ogee arch planted upon it, as at Pinchbeck, Lincs. (82), where the relief is so great that the provision of a little corbel beneath it converts the panel into a niche for a figure, which is now missing.

A transom is often introduced in doors of the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and is rarely satisfactory. Generally the proportions are spoilt, and in the case of an outside door, ledges are formed which trap the rain and lead to decay. The introduction of the transom naturally led to the abandonment of the old method of construction, and to the adoption of framed construction, as in the vestry door at Ludlow. The sixteenth-century doors of Totnes, Devon (85), with their framework encrusted with foliage and Italian arabesques carved in the panels, are good examples of this late phase in door design.

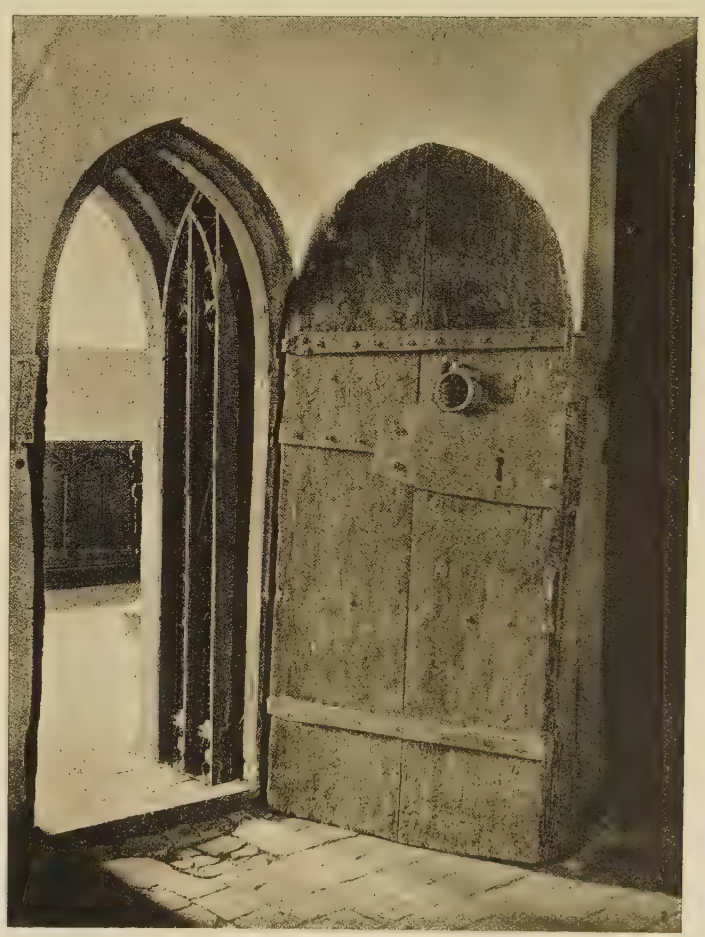
The larger doors are generally hung in two leaves, partly to relieve the hinges and partly to allow of the use of half the door at a time. At Ewelme the north door is hung folding, that is, it is jointed and hinged down the middle, so that one half folds back upon the other. This is very exceptional. Often a wicket is provided, usually on the centre line of the door, as in the case of the single door at Thornham, Norfolk (83), and in the double doors of King's Lynn (84), where the wicket is also in two leaves. In many cases the wicket is planned to come in one of the leaves, and symmetry is abandoned, as in the doors of the south transept of York minster. In these great doors grace and utility are ingeniously combined. They are jointed vertically and horizontally, and have a wicket in one of the lower leaves, so that either the wicket one or both lower leaves may be used, or the entire door may be flung wide open to admit the fresh air.

The presence of a wicket usually modifies the whole design of a door, and may throw it entirely out of symmetry. In the latter case it is remarkable how little the lop-sidedness is noticed. Indeed, it is rather agreeable than otherwise. However, in some cases no modification is made. The doors are completed, and the door sawn out afterwards, as at Pinchbeck (82), where the wicket is practically concealed.

SIMPLE BOARDED DOORS WITH STRAP HINGES

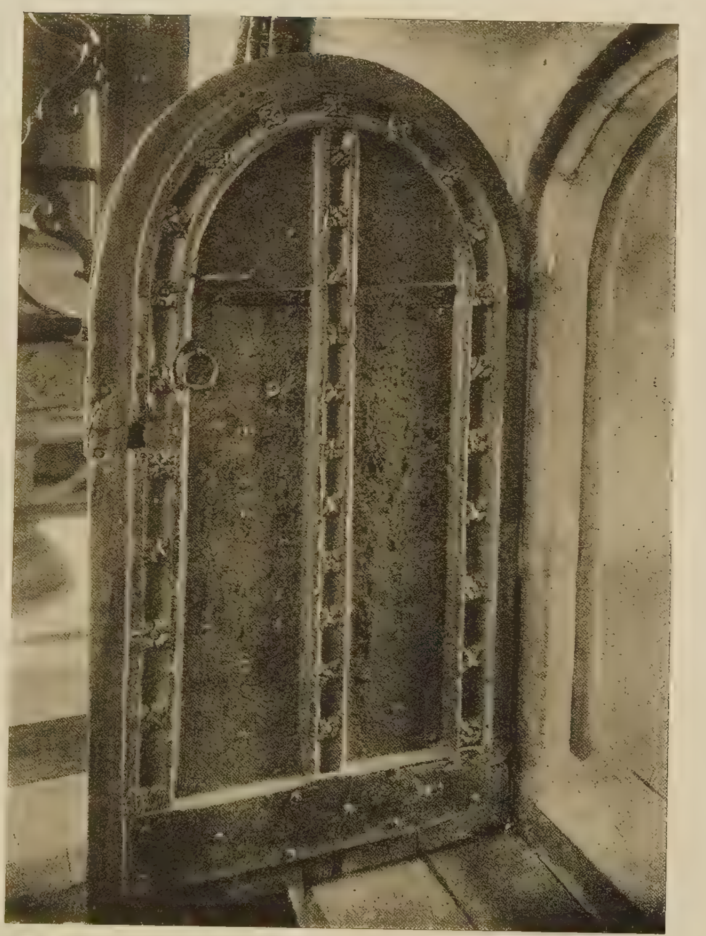


BUNBURY, CHESHIRE, FOURTEENTH-CENTURY SOUTH DOOR

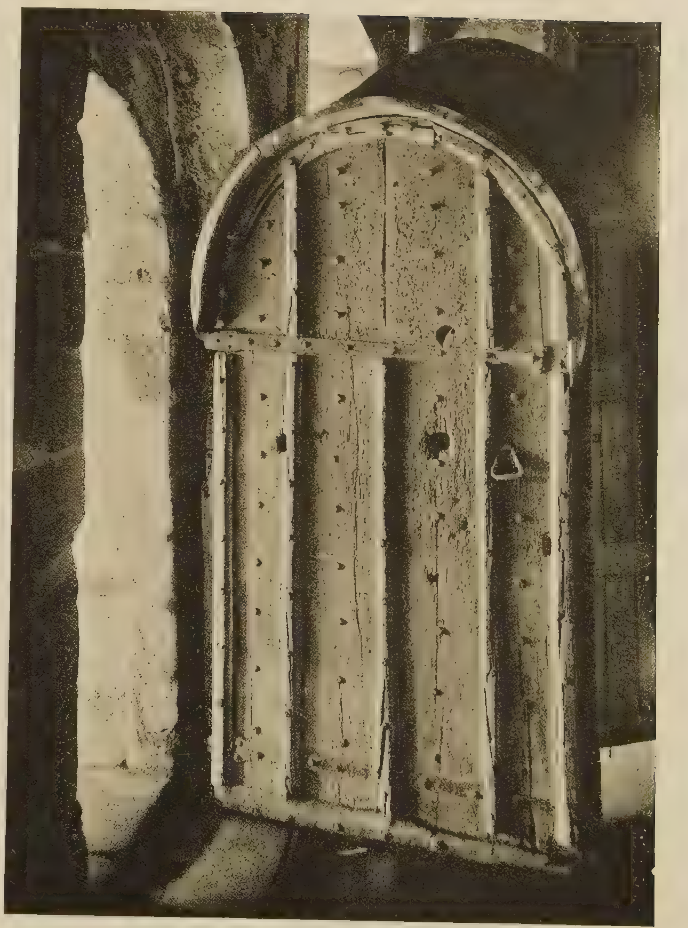


BARKING, SUFFOLK, VESTRY DOORS

DOORS WITH APPLIED MOULDED FRAMES

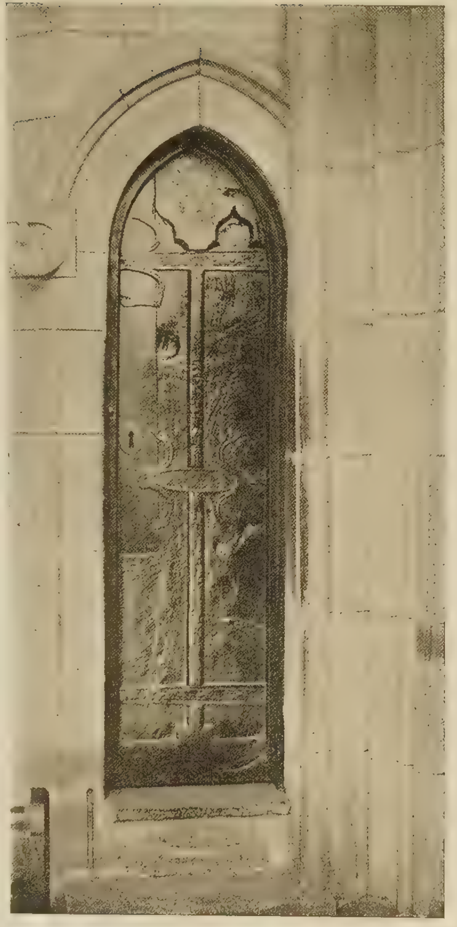


ASTBURY, CHESHIRE, ENRICHED MOULDINGS

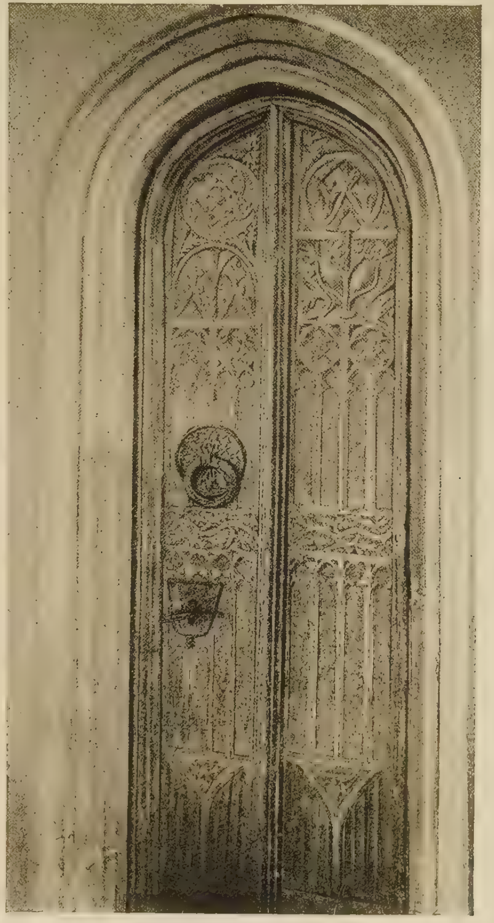


SHOTWICK, CHESHIRE, SIMPLE MOULDINGS

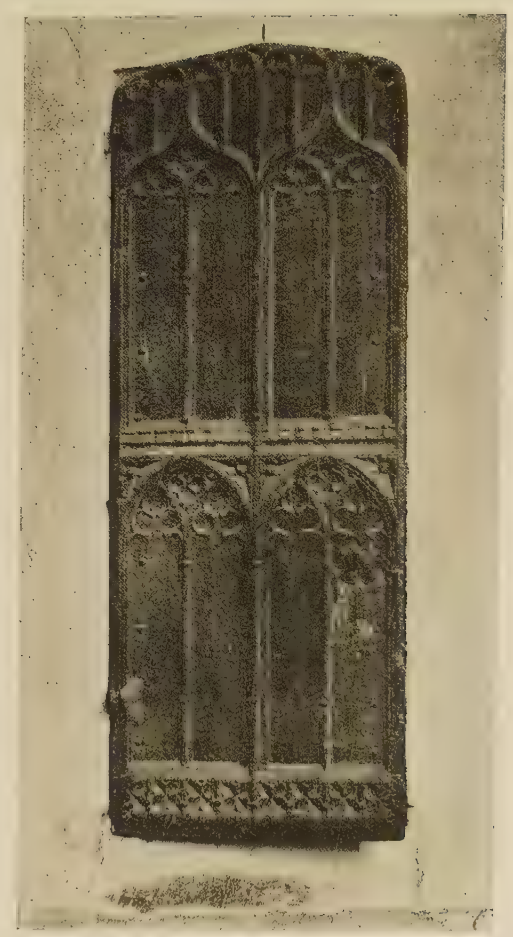
DOORS WITH SUNK TRACERY (ROOD-STAIR DOORS)



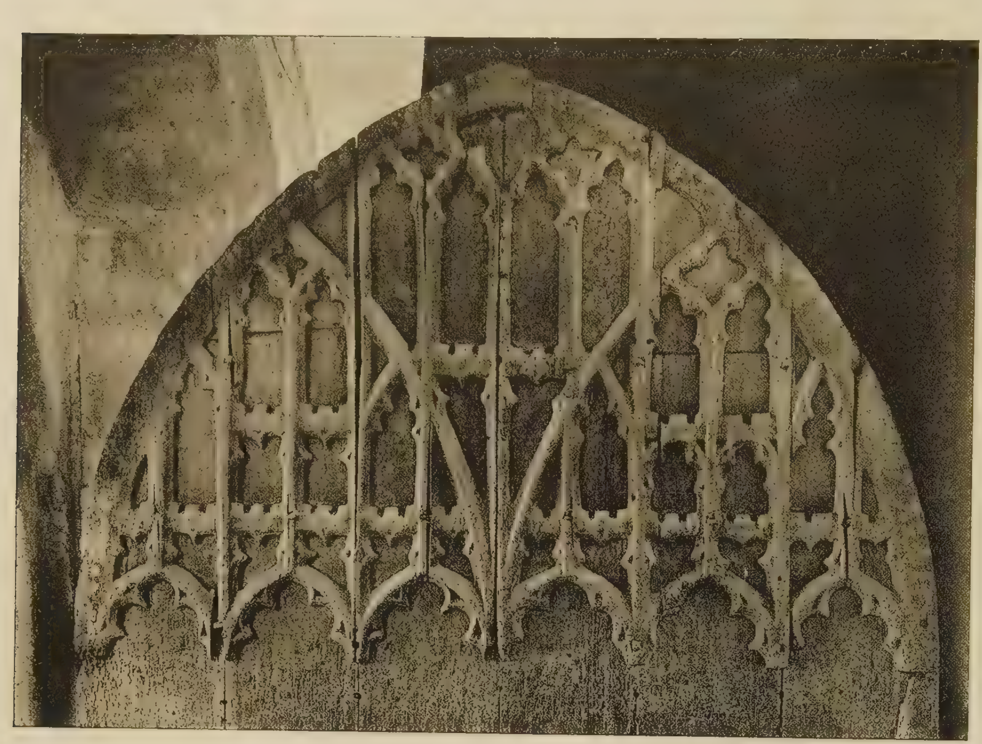
ASHBOURNE, DERBY,
FOURTEENTH CENTURY



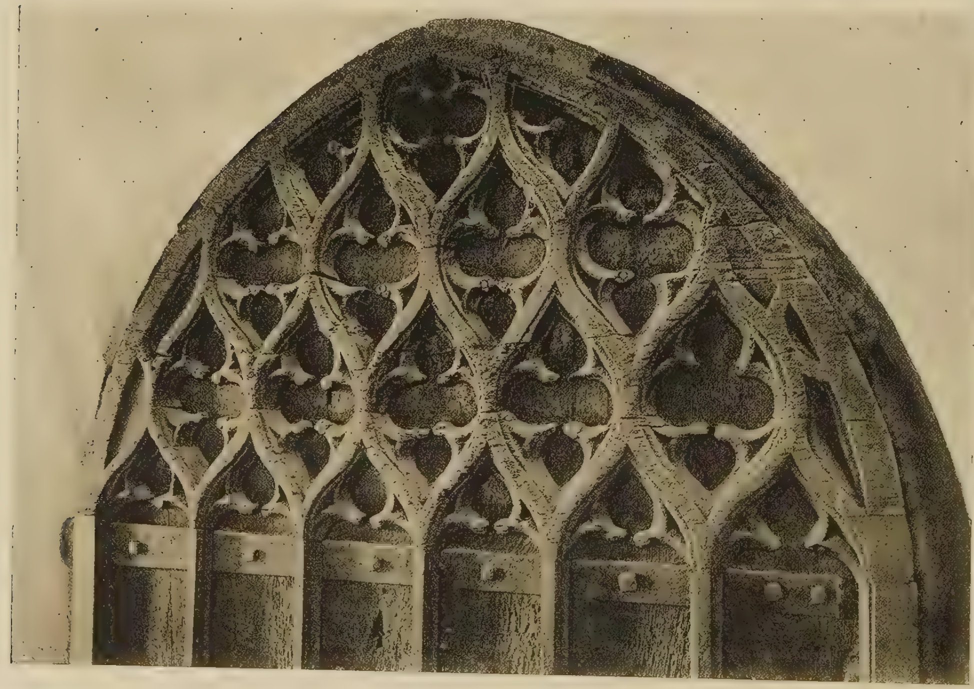
STOGUMBER, SOMERSET,
EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY



BLEWBURY, BERKS.,
FIFTEENTH CENTURY

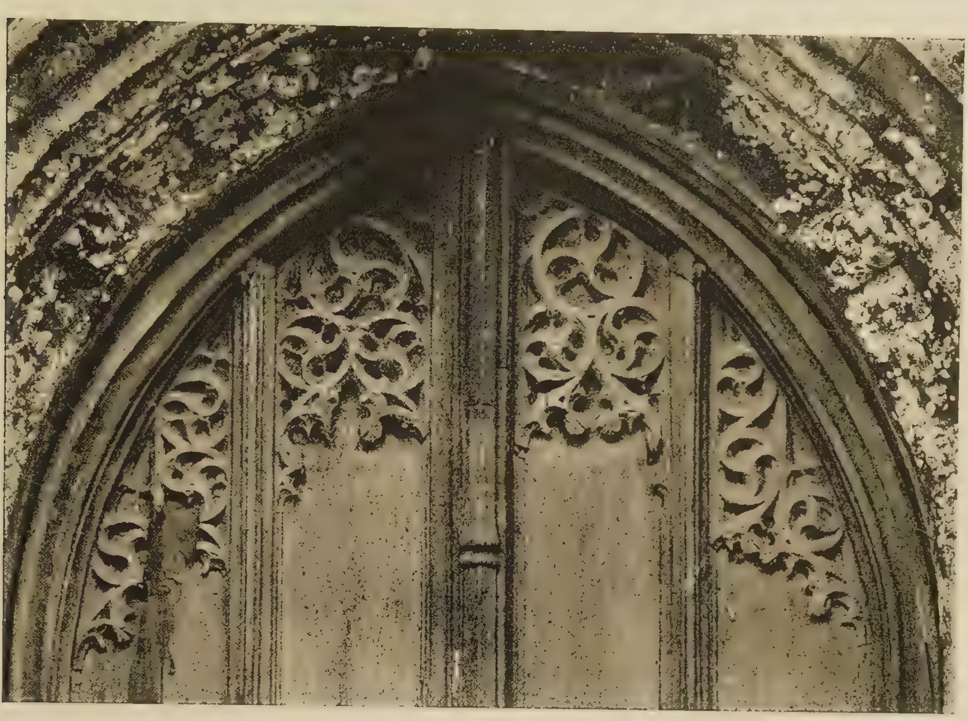


ADDLETHORPE, LINCS., EARLY FIFTEENTH CENTURY, EASTERN SCHOOL

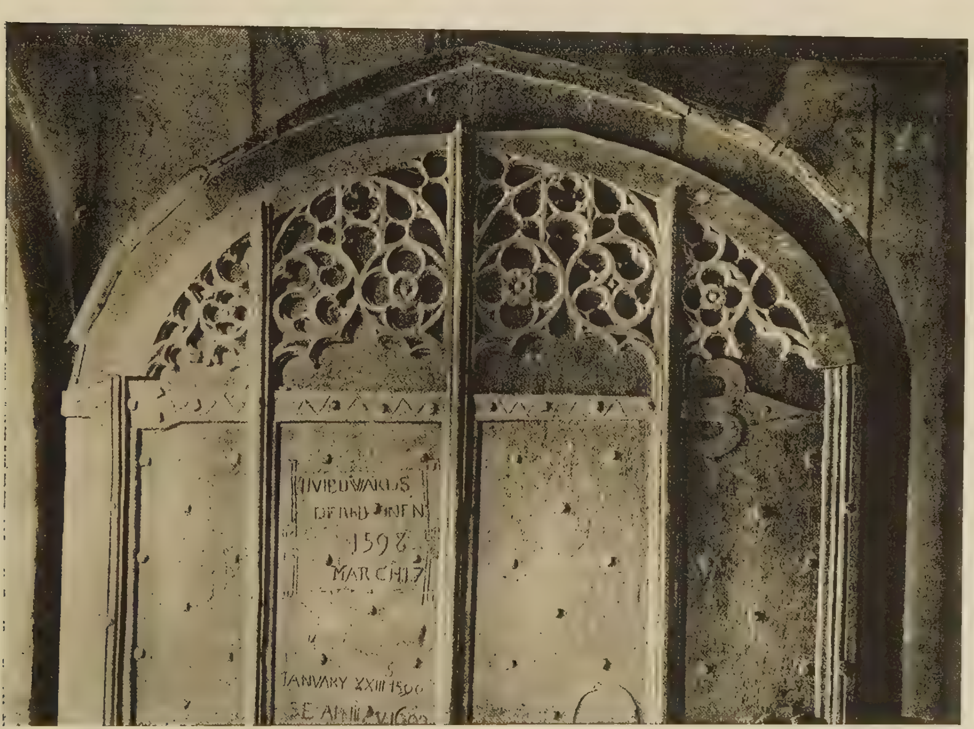


WELLOW, SOMERSET, EARLY FIFTEENTH CENTURY, WESTERN SCHOOL

DOORS WITH APPLIED MOULDED FRAME AND TRACERIED PANELS

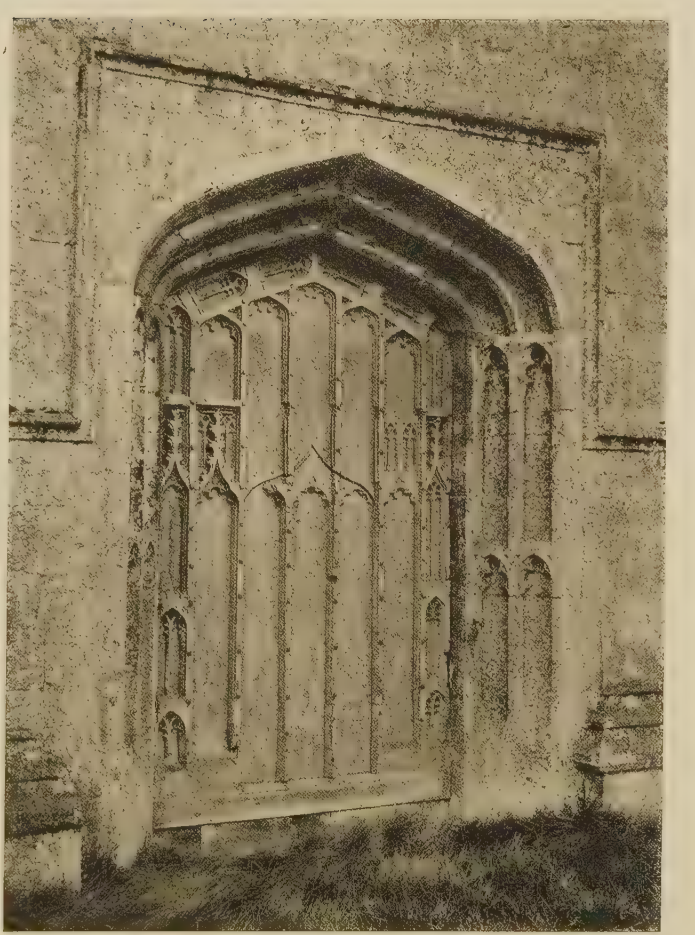


COPDOCK, SUFFOLK, WEST DOOR

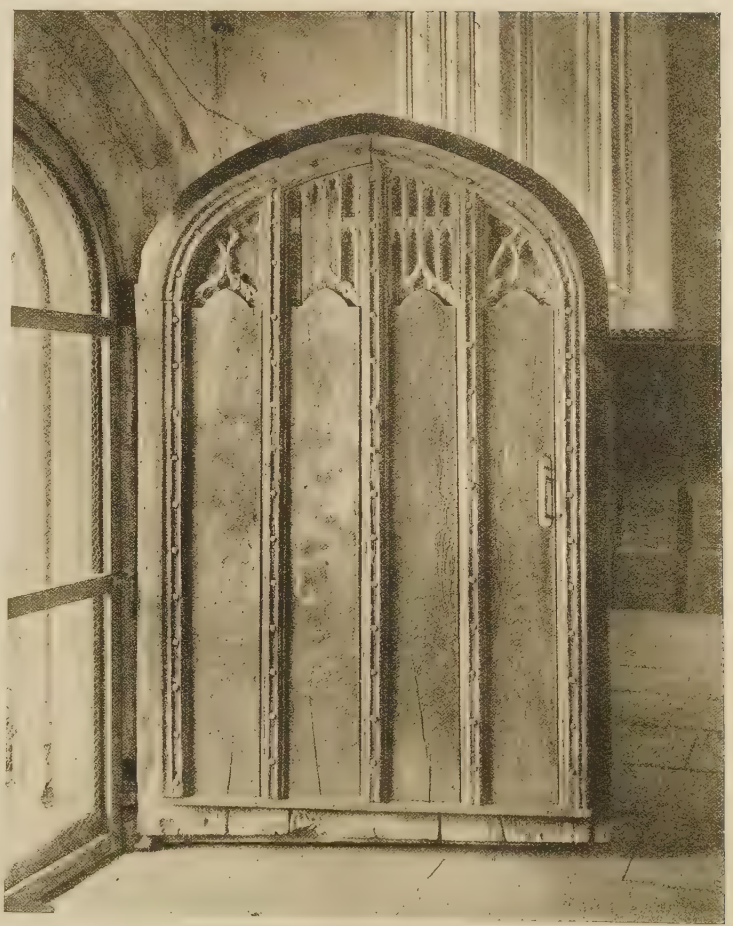


LLANYNYS, DENBIGH, SOUTH DOOR

LATE FIFTEENTH-CENTURY DOORS FROM LINCOLNSHIRE

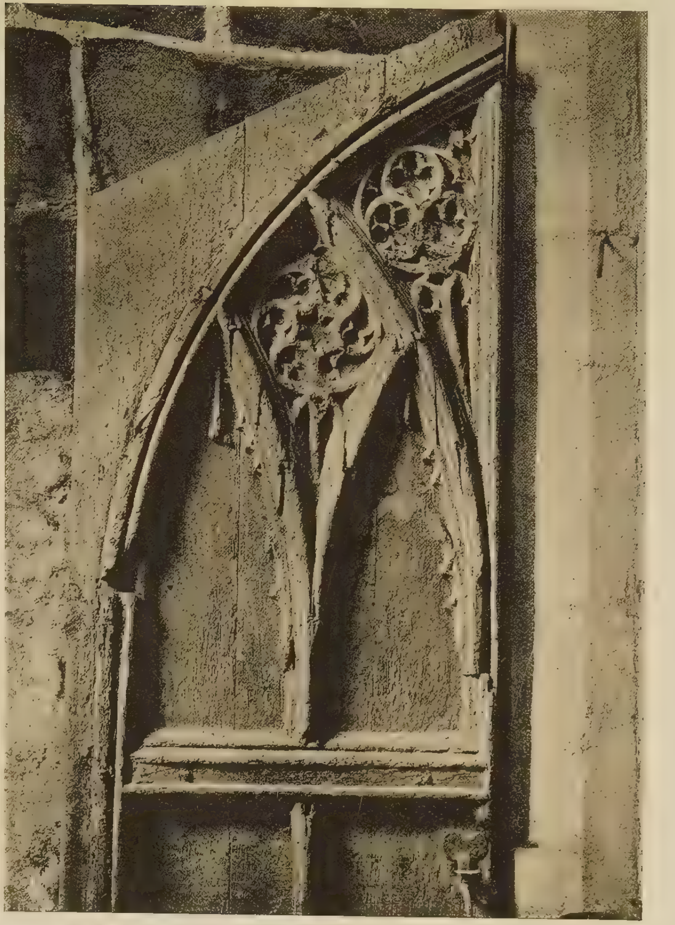


PINCHBECK, LINCS., WITH HIDDEN WICKET

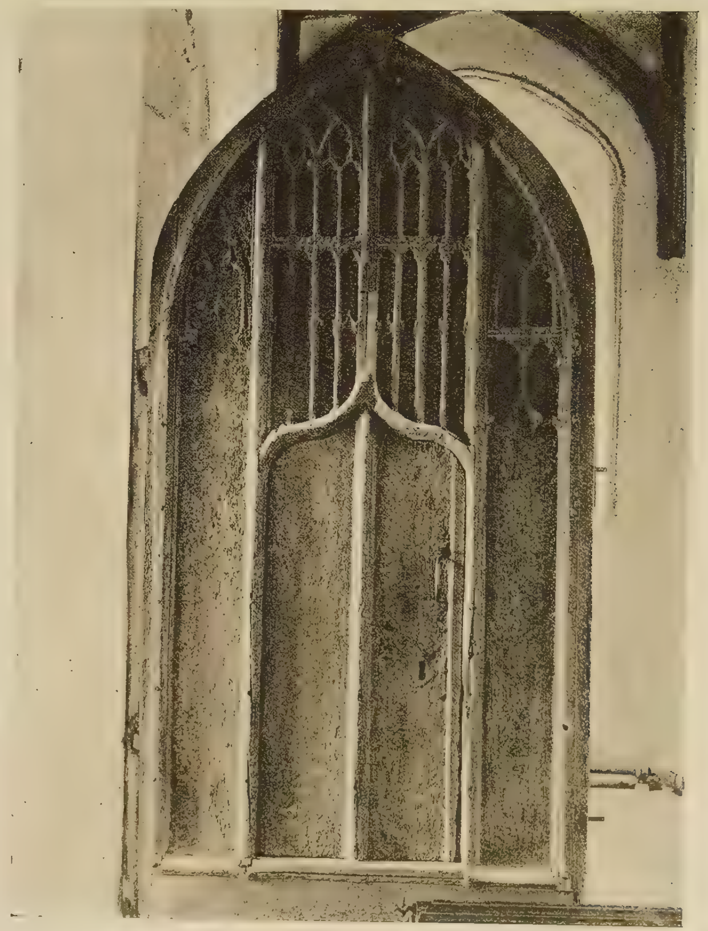


TATTERSHALL, LINCS., WITH APPLIED FRAME AND TRACERIES

DOORS WITH APPLIED FRAMES, HAVING CURVED MEMBERS

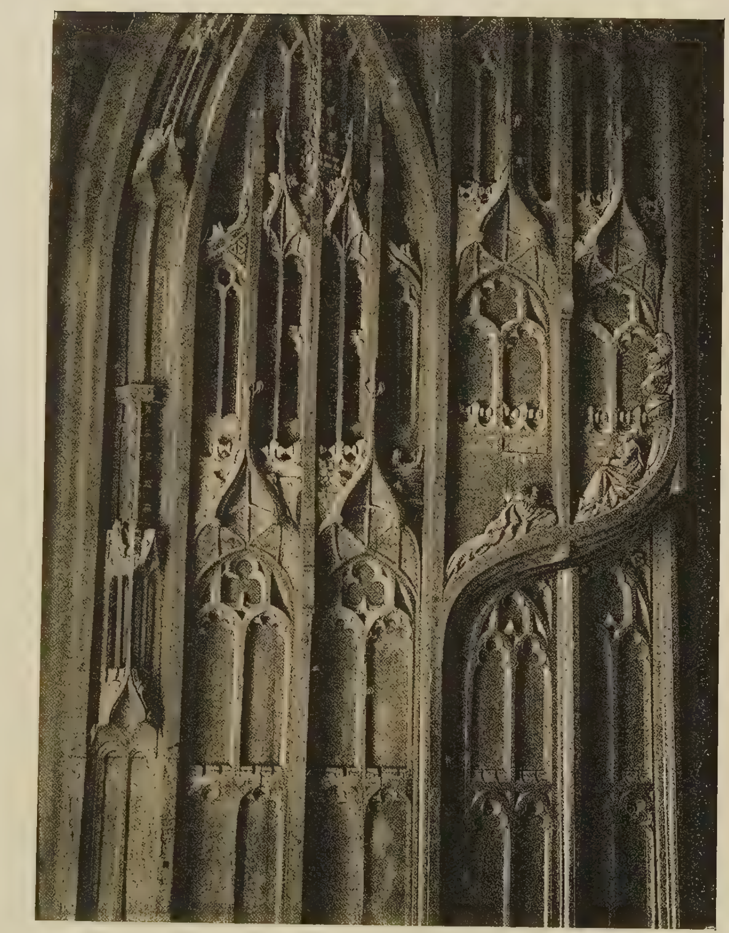


WINTHORPE, LINCS., WITH TRANSOM

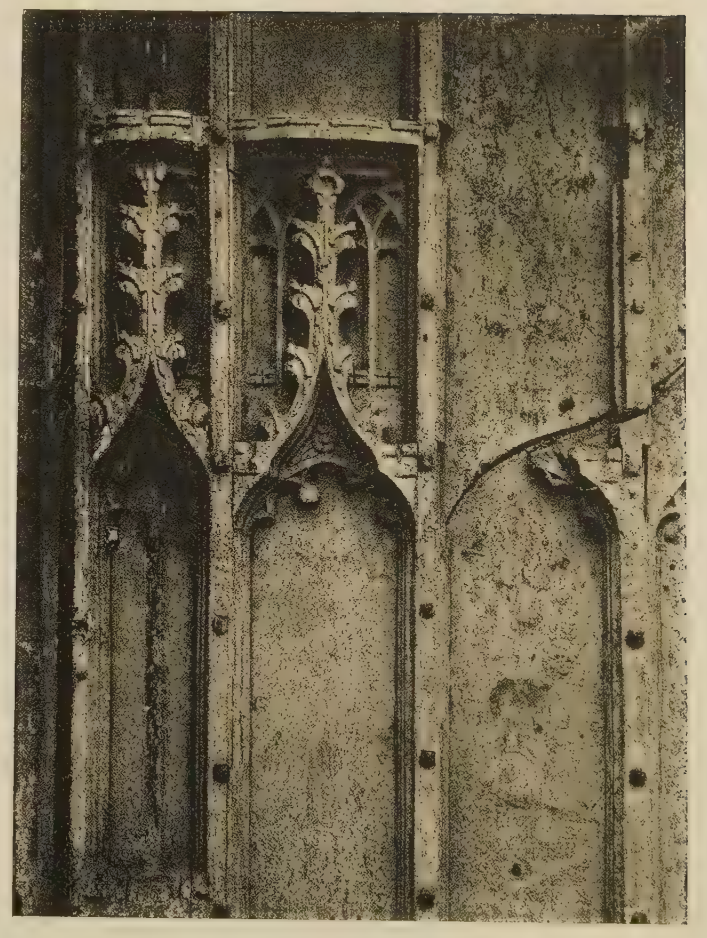


THORNHAM, NORFOLK, WITH OGEE-HEADED WICKET

TABERNACLE WORK APPLIED TO DOORS

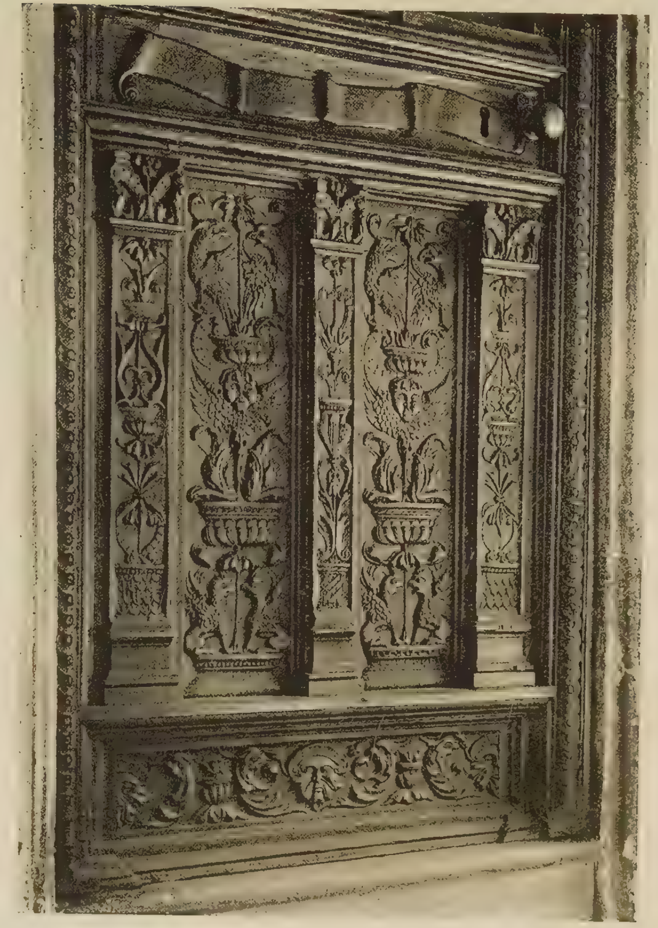


KING'S LYNN ST NICHOLAS, NORFOLK

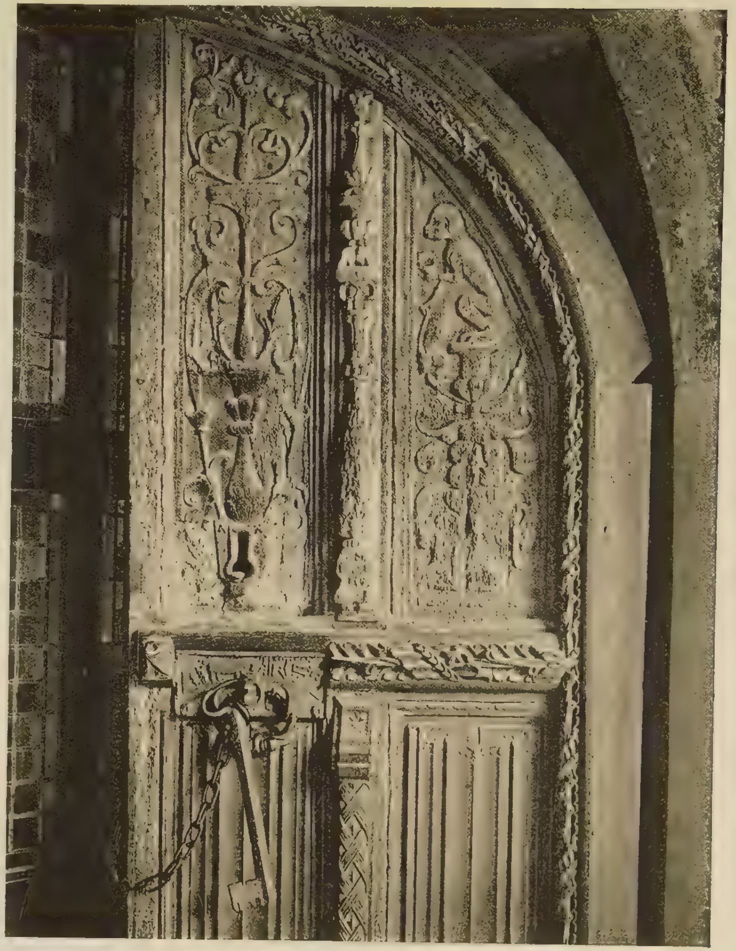


PINCHBECK, LINCS.

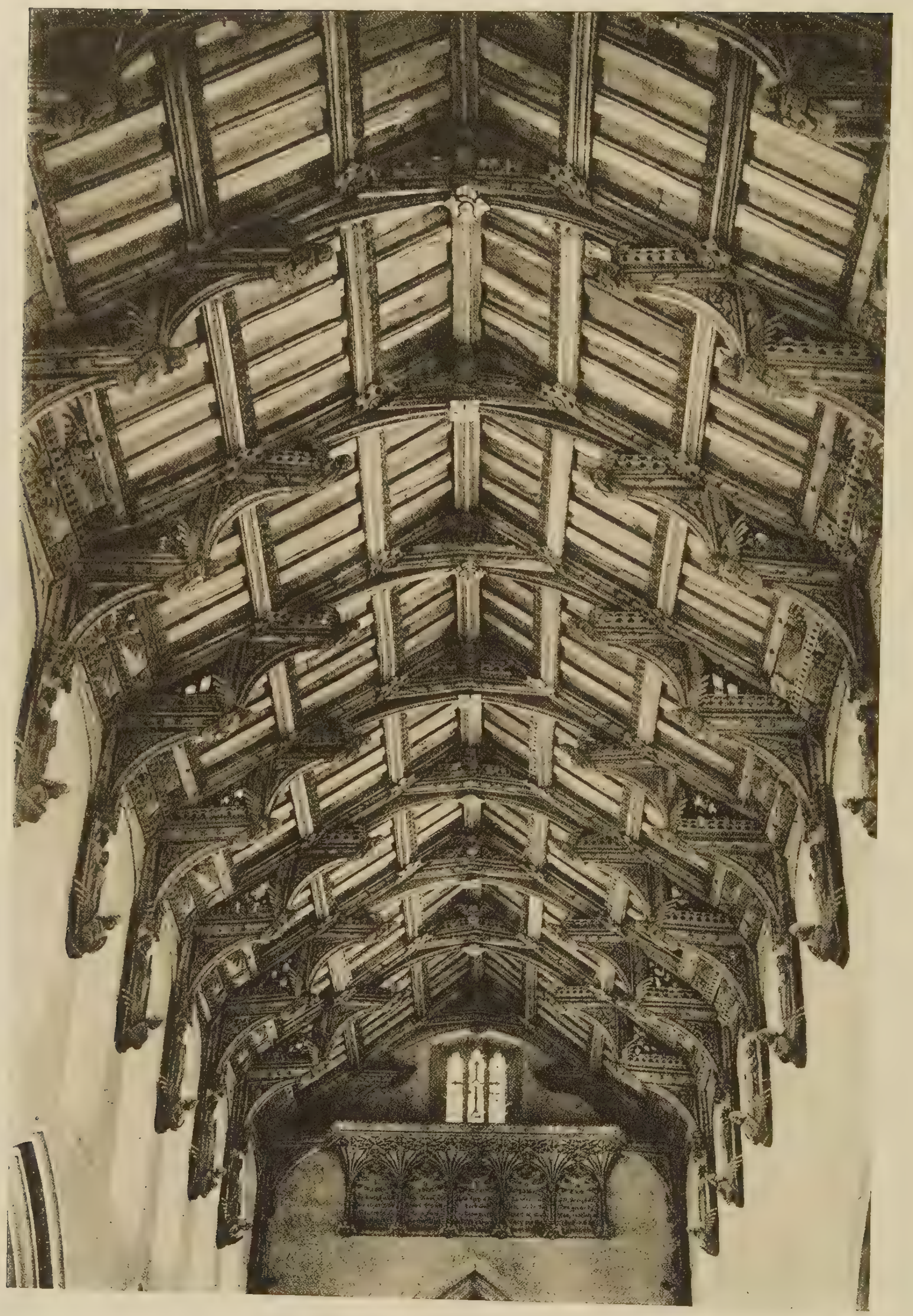
RENAISSANCE DETAIL IN EARLY SIXTEENTH-CENTURY DOORS



TIVERTON, DEVON, GREENWAY CHAPEL



TOTNES, DEVON, SOUTH DOOR



WOOLPIT, SUFFOLK, "FALSE" DOUBLE HAMMER-BEAM ROOF

ROOFS

The design and construction of roofs is a branch of mediæval church woodwork in which the skill and ingenuity of the mediæval craftsman is seen at its best. Of course there are many roofs of purely utilitarian character, designed according to traditional methods, with no conscious effort to produce a thing of beauty, but even these have charm. Indeed the ugly roof is a product of the Renaissance, developed to the greatest possible degree of hideousness by the incomparable genius of the Gothic revival. When the mediæval designer was given the opportunity of producing a fine and elaborate roof his success was remarkable. There are few more beautiful things in art than such roofs as those at Worlingworth (123), Badingham (29), Wellow (111), or Cullompton (117). But few lovers of ancient woodwork appear to study the roofs of the churches they visit, and it is strange how many otherwise admirable accounts of mediæval buildings either fail to mention the roofs at all, or describe them in such a dubious and uncertain way that their account is almost unintelligible. The fact is that the study of roofs has not progressed in the least since the publication of Brandon's book in 1849.

A timber roof is really a framework of wood, carrying a layer of impervious material, protecting the building from the elements. It has been found after ages of experiment that the best way of constructing such a frame is to lay timbers, called wall plates, along the top of the side walls, and to fix inclined timbers, called rafters, to these plates at intervals of about a foot. When one of the plates is fixed at a higher level than the other and the rafters are used singly, a lean-to roof is produced, and when the plates are at the same level and the rafters are used in pairs, pitching against one another, a gabled roof results. The rafters are finally covered with battens, boarding, or both, to receive the roofing, whether of slates, tiles, or lead. Various methods are employed to prevent the rafters sagging under the weight of the roofing and the pressure of the wind, and to counteract, or at least to minimise, the outward thrust upon the walls. Hence the great variety of design in open timber roofs.

It is a great help to the study of mediæval roofs to remember that there are but three main classes, namely, Beam Roofs, Thrusting Roofs, and Trussed Roofs. All these three types seem to have been in use from the earliest times.

The simplest possible version of the *Beam Roof* is the flat, composed of beams laid at intervals across the shortest span, and the different varieties are due to the attempts to improve upon it by preventing the sagging of the beams, and by the endeavour to combine the advantages of the horizontal beam and its absence of thrust with those of the gabled roof. The beam roof acts as a dead weight, steadying the walls of the building and helping to keep them upright.

The most elementary form of *Thrusting Roof* is the couple roof, consisting of pairs of rafters, pitching against each other. The collar roof is a useful development in which the rafters are strutted apart by a beam called a collar, fixed about midway between the plate and the apex. Such a roof tends to thrust the side walls outwards, and most of the different species are the result of attempts to reduce the thrust by bringing it down as low as possible, and as nearly as possible vertically. Other variations are introduced in order to prevent the sagging of the rafters and to improve the joint at the apex, which presents some practical difficulties.

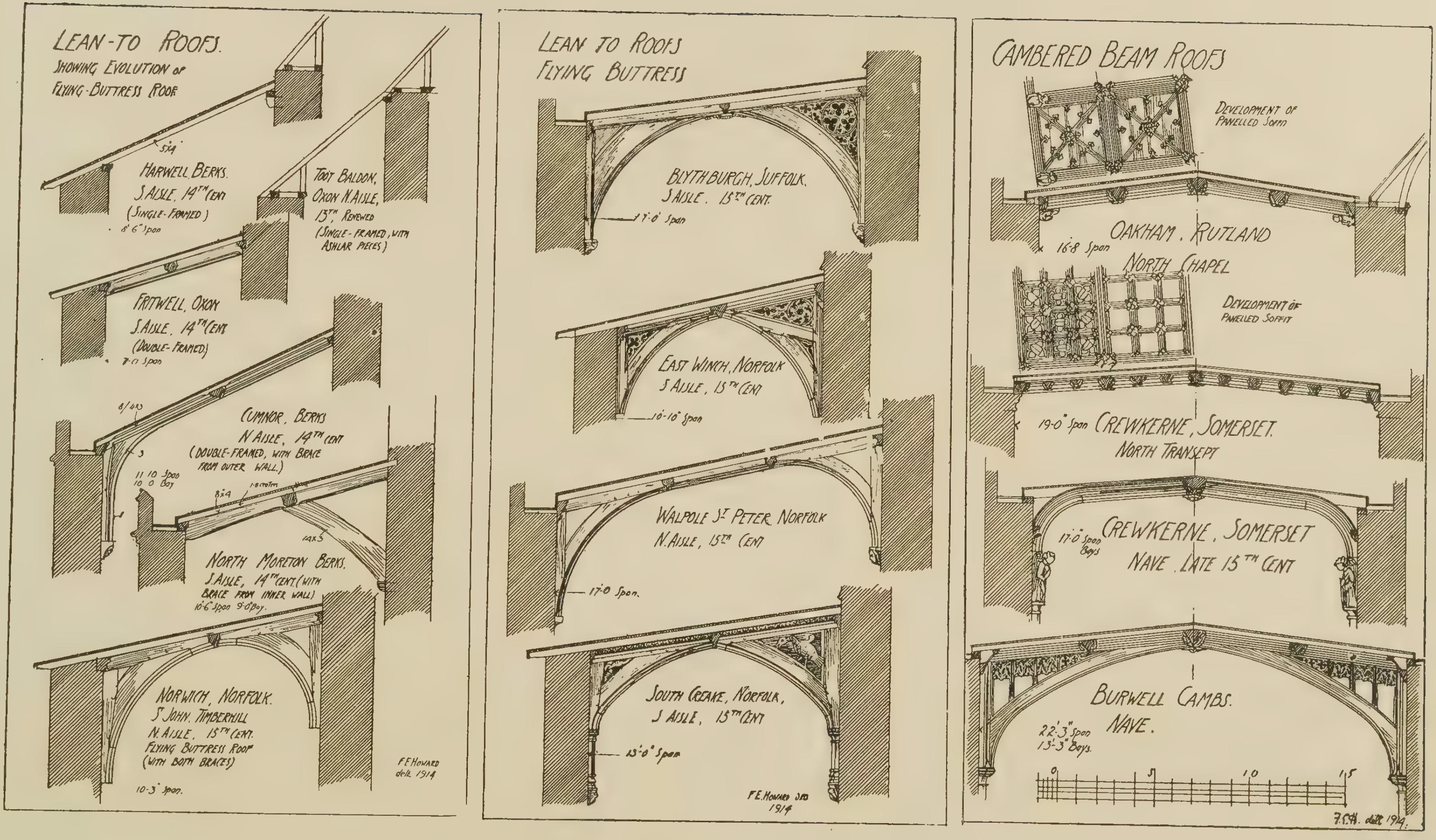
The type of *Trussed Roof* most in use in mediæval England is based upon the couple-close roof, consisting of a couple of rafters prevented from spreading by a tie-beam. It may be regarded as a combination of the first two classes. The tie-beam roof combines the advantages of a gabled roof with the absence of thrust, but is subject to the drawback of limited head room. The various kinds are caused by expedients introduced to prevent the rafters and the tie-beam from sagging under their load. The scissor-beam roof, which may be also considered as a trussed roof, is very rare, indeed, in this country.

Nearly every kind of roof may be constructed according to two different systems. The devices for preventing thrust or sagging may be applied to every pair of rafters, in which case the roof is inscribed as *Single-framed.* On the other hand, experience shows that for roofs of fairly wide span it is more economical and effective to apply the methods to certain pairs only, transmitting the effect to the intermediate rafters by means of longitudinal timbers called purlins. The specially reinforced pairs of rafters are called principals, while the others are known as common rafters. A roof in which principals and purlins are employed is described as *Double-framed.*

Beam Roofs.—The problem of the prevention of sagging was solved by the mediæval carpenters in the case of the beam roof, first by cambering the beams, that is, by choosing those slightly curved or bent, and fixing them with the concave side downwards, or by cutting the beams to this form. Secondly, by strutting them up from the side walls by means of straight or curved braces. It was discovered at a very early date that it was a good plan to fix a post against the wall supported on a corbel and framed into the end of the beam. This carried the weight down to a lower level, and saved many roofs from disaster when the ends of the beam, resting on the masonry, decayed and rotted away. It also served to distribute the thrust of the braces.

The rafters of a beam roof are tilted into gabled or lean-to form by the fixing of the wall plates and purlins at different levels. The principal beams of a lean-to roof were generally fixed at the same angle as the common rafters, but as these inclined beams tended to push the walls out, the beams were occasionally fixed horizontally, the purlin was laid on the top, and the inner wall plate was carried at a higher level on corbels or an offset of the inner wall. When the pitch is increased it is necessary to prop up the purlin on a block of wood or a post if the pitch is really steep.

The beams of a gabled roof were usually firred up to the outline of the gable by means of tapered firring pieces, laid on the top of


LEAN-TO ROOFS.
SHOWING EVOLUTION OF FLYING-BUTTRESS ROOF
5x4
HARWELL, BERKS. S. AISLE, 14TH CENT (SINGLE-FRAMED)
8' 6" Span
TOOT BALDON, OXON N. AISLE, 13TH, RENEWED (SINGLE-FRAMED, WITH ASHLAR PIECES)
FRITWELL, OXON S. AISLE, 14TH CENT (DOUBLE-FRAMED)
7-11 Span
8/4
CUMNOR, BERKS N AISLE, 14TH CENT (DOUBLE-FRAMED, WITH BRACE FROM OUTER WALL.)
11 10 Span
10 0 Bay
8x4
14x5
NORTH MORETON BERKS. S. AISLE, 14TH CENT. (WITH BRACE FROM INNER WALL)
10'6" Span 9'0" Bay.
NORWICH, NORFOLK. ST JOHN, TIMBERHILL N. AISLE, 15TH CENT. FLYING BUTTRESS ROOF (WITH BOTH BRACES)
10-3" Span.
F.E. Howard delt 1914
LEAN TO ROOFS FLYING BUTTRESS
BLYTHBURGH, SUFFOLK. S AISLE, 15TH CENT.
17-0' Span
EAST WINCH, NORFOLK S AISLE, 15TH CENT
10'-10" Span
WALPOLE ST PETER NORFOLK N. AISLE, 15TH CENT
17-0 Span.
SOUTH CREAKE, NORFOLK, S AISLE, 15TH CENT
13'-0" Span
F.E. Howard Del 1914
CAMBERED BEAM ROOFS
DEVELOPMENT OF PANELLED SOFFIT
16-8 Span
OAKHAM, RUTLAND NORTH CHAPEL
DEVELOPMENT OF PANELLED SOFFIT
19-0" Span
CREWKERNE, SOMERSET. NORTH TRANSEPT
17-0" Span Bays
CREWKERNE, SOMERSET NAVE. LATE 15TH CENT
BURWELL CAMBS. NAVE.
22'-3" Span
13'-3" Bays.
0
5
10
15
F.E.H. delt 1914.

BEAM ROOFS

the beams, but in later roofs the camber of the beam was often sufficient to tilt the rafters and to throw the rain off a lead roof. In the case of a roof of sharper pitch the ridge purlin was propped up on a post, while the side purlins rested on the beam. When a really acute pitch was necessary they were all supported on posts of the required length. When these were tall it was essential that they should be stayed by braces from the common rafters or from the beam to prevent their collapsing. Excessively tall centre or king-posts were sometimes avoided by providing each pair of rafters with a collar-beam, and by fixing the purlin beneath these instead of at the apex of the rafters, as in the fine roof of Barking (116).

All these varieties of the beam roof were probably in use at the time of the Norman Conquest. The problem which the Gothic craftsmen had to solve was to turn the purely utilitarian arrangement of rough-hewn beams and posts into a thing of beauty. The braces were first taken in hand, and an attempt was made to make each pair form a perfect arch. Generally the fourteenth-century braces were very sprawling and ungraceful in outline, but towards the end of the period their shape improved. These early braces were generally thick and massive, with rich and deeply cut mouldings. The next step was to fill the spandrels above the braces with thin panels of pierced tracery, as in the fine roof of the nave at Sparsholt, Berks.

In the fifteenth century the wall posts were elongated, tending to bring the weight of the roof lower down and to steady the side walls, which were often reduced to mere piers by the huge size of the windows. The braces, on the other hand, were reduced in size, and were usually worked to the outline of a four-centered arch. Sometimes the beam is sufficiently cambered to form the central section of the arch, while the braces become mere triangular brackets to reduce the span of the beam.

In the flat or slightly pitched beam roof the chief decorative possibilities lie in the treatment of the underside of the roof slope. The principals play a secondary part, though they are sometimes richly adorned with mouldings and carved enrichments, or with carved spandrels, above the braces. A perfectly flat type of beam roof is used over the aisles of some of the Devon churches, usually as a ceiling, covered with an outer lean-to. Braces and wall posts are never employed in the beam roofs of this county. The oldest examples have simply moulded timbers, forming large square panels, which are now generally plastered, concealing the rafters, but the latter were formerly either boarded over or exposed to view. The intersections of the timbers are sometimes covered with large round carved bosses, as at Ugborough, where the subjects of the carving are reminiscent of those of misericords. The panels are sometimes subdivided by diagonal ribs, as in the aisle roofs at Cullompton, and at Ashburton all the timbers are encrusted with splendid carved foliage.

In Somerset and Dorset churches of the fifteenth century the cambered beam roof is very often employed in the aisles, as at Mark. The beams and purlins are large and well moulded, and subdivide the underside of the roof into small squares. These are boarded over, and in some cases diagonal ribs with bosses at their intersections are introduced, as at Dunster, but the most typical treatment is the decoration of the panel with tracery. Sometimes the design of the tracery is the same in every panel, or two designs are alternated, but there are several gorgeous examples in which the same design is never repeated. The wall posts and braces are omitted in the south, as at Crewkerne, and in the rest of the county they are small in size, but richly decorated with foliaged spandrels.

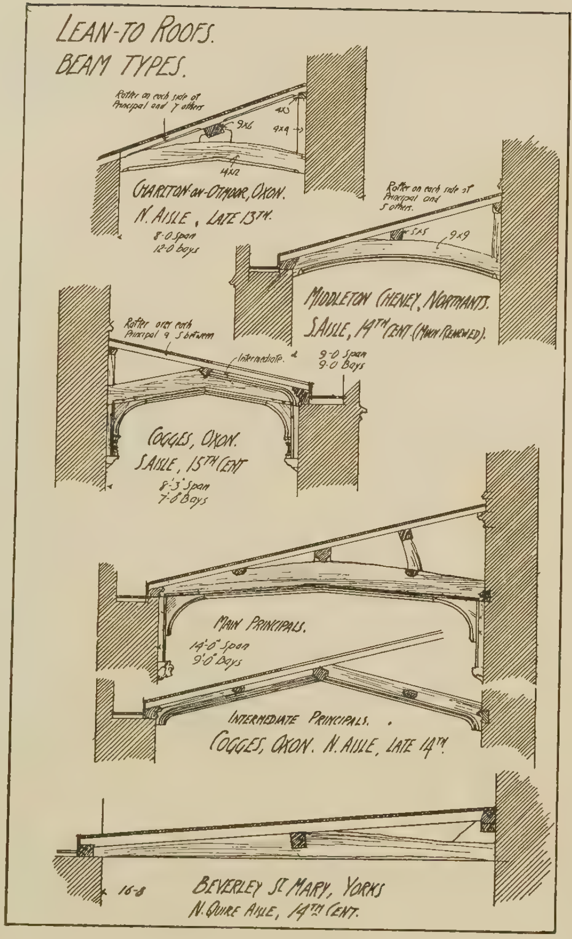
In Wales there are a few very fine firred beam roofs, resembling the cambered beam roofs of Somerset, but with the usual Welsh peculiarities of very elaborate filigree tracery on the sides of the beams, in the mouldings of the timbers, and in the square panels. Gresford (113) is a rather plain example.

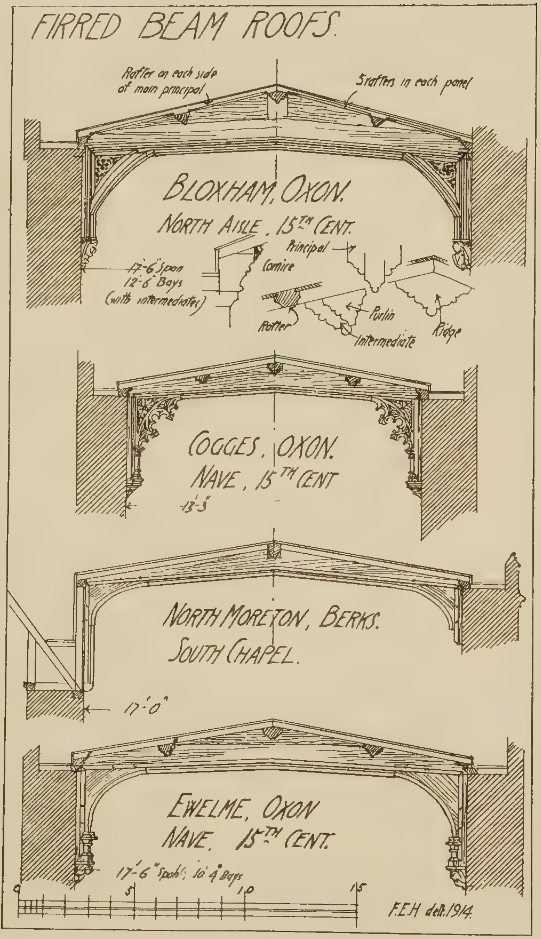
Cheshire can also show a particularly fine group of firred beam roofs with small braces, deep beams with traceried sides, and richly-panelled under-surface, as at St Mary's, Chester (114), and Witton (113), where each panel has diagonal ribs. The traceried treatment also occurs, for instance, in the aisle roof of Malpas. In the typical Cheshire roof all the intersections of the timbers are covered with elaborate and delicate bosses, usually composed of delicately fretted leaves hiding the mitres, covered with a square boss of intricate tracery or strapwork, often in the form of a wreath enclosing a monogram. Fragile trails of flamboyant tracery are very freely employed as a moulding enrichment. The cambering of the common rafters is a rather uncommon local peculiarity. It is found at Mobberley and Gawsworth (114).

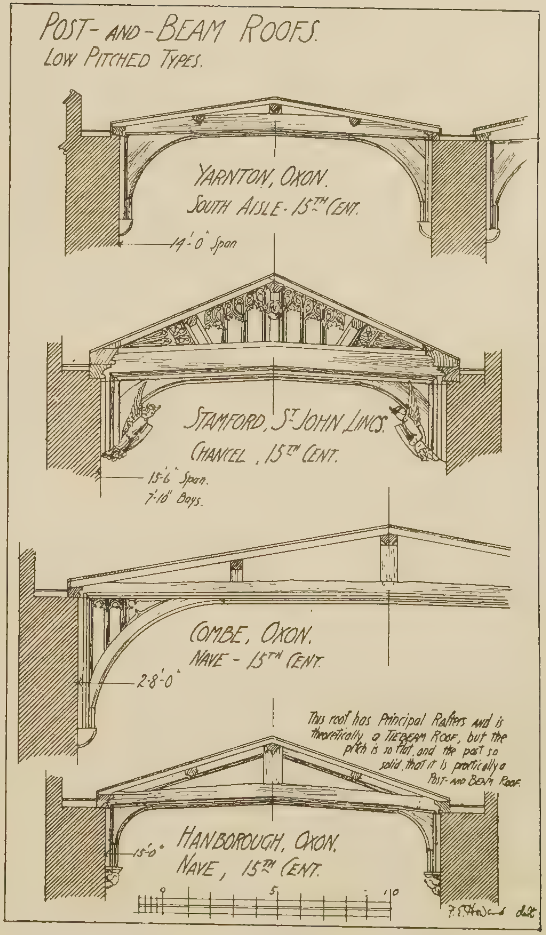
In the north-eastern counties the wall posts and braces are often omitted. The firred beam roof is preferred, but is very rarely treated with such elaboration as those of the West. The nave of Beverley St Mary (112) is a good instance. The absence of the braces and wall posts is a great calamity from both the constructional and the artistic points of view; many of them give the effect of mere lids to the buildings they cover.

The beam roof occurs only occasionally in the eastern counties, but when it is employed the results are very successful. The cambered beam roofs of St Neots, Hunts., Burwell, Cambs., and St Andrew, Norwich, are lovely examples, with arch braces of fine outline, enormously long wall posts, and gracefully traceried spandrels. The firred beam roof is scarcer in the East, but Blythburgh, Suffolk (115), has a magnificent roof of this type, splendidly decorated in colour. In the eastern counties the panelled treatment of the roof surface is practically unknown, and the rafters, about equal in width to the spaces between them, are exposed. The most striking eastern roofs of the beam type are the inclined beam roofs of the aisles. These are provided with wall posts and deep arch braces of somewhat acute two-centered outline, as at East Winch (110), or of a beautiful ramping curve, and act as flying buttresses to carry the thrust of the nave roof across to the aisle buttresses. The spandrels are often huge, and are filled in with very charming fretted tracery, and the wall plates, and sometimes the purlins also, are edged with delicate crestings.

The beam roofs of the Midland and south-eastern districts are generally of extreme simplicity. Their somewhat elementary mouldings are their chief ornament; carved bosses are rarely used,


LEAN-TO ROOFS.
BEAM TYPES.
Rafter on each side of Principal and 7 others
4x5
9x6
4x4
4x12
CHARLTON-ON-OTMOOR, OXON.
N. AISLE, LATE 13TH.
8-0 Span
12-0 bays
Rafter on each side of Principal and 5 others.
5x5
9x9
MIDDLETON CHENEY, NORTHANTS.
S. AISLE, 14TH CENT. (MAIN RENEWED).
Rafter over each Principal & 5 between
Intermediate.
9-0 Span
9-0 Bays
COGGES, OXON.
S. AISLE, 15TH CENT
8'-3" Span
7-8 Bays
MAIN PRINCIPALS.
14'-0" Span
9'-0" Bays
INTERMEDIATE PRINCIPALS.
COGGES, OXON. N. AISLE, LATE 14TH.
16-8
BEVERLEY ST MARY, YORKS
N. QUIRE AISLE, 14TH CENT.


FIRRED BEAM ROOFS.
Rafter on each side of main principal
5 rafters in each panel
BLOXHAM, OXON.
NORTH AISLE, 15TH CENT.
17'-6" Span
12'-6" Bays
(with intermediates)
Principal
Cornice
Rafter
Purlin
Intermediate
Ridge
COGGES, OXON.
NAVE, 15TH CENT
13'-3"
NORTH MORETON, BERKS.
SOUTH CHAPEL.
17'-0"
EWELME, OXON
NAVE. 15TH CENT.
17'-6" Span; 10'-4" Bays
0
5
10
15
F.E.H. delt. 1914.


POST-AND-BEAM ROOFS.
LOW PITCHED TYPES.
YARNTON, OXON.
SOUTH AISLE - 15TH CENT.
14'-0" Span
STAMFORD, ST JOHN LINCS.
CHANCEL, 15TH CENT.
15'-6" Span.
7'-10" Bays.
COMBE, OXON.
NAVE - 15TH CENT.
28'-0"
This roof has Principal Rafters and is theoretically a TIEBEAM ROOF, but the pitch is so flat, and the post so solid, that it is practically a Post-and Beam Roof.
HANBOROUGH, OXON.
NAVE, 15TH CENT.
15'-0"
0
5
10
F. E. Howard delt.

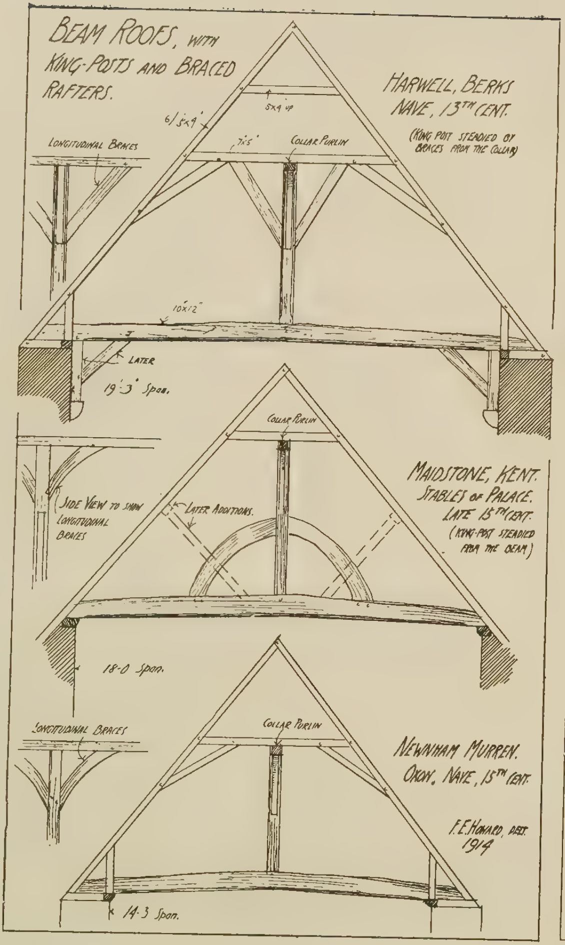
BEAM ROOFS

and other carved enrichments seldom occur. The post and beam variety is most characteristic in both lean-to and gabled forms, but the firred beam roof of Ewelme (115) is very typical. The inclined beam roof is common in aisles, but it is scarcely ever provided with wall posts and braces, or treated decoratively (90).

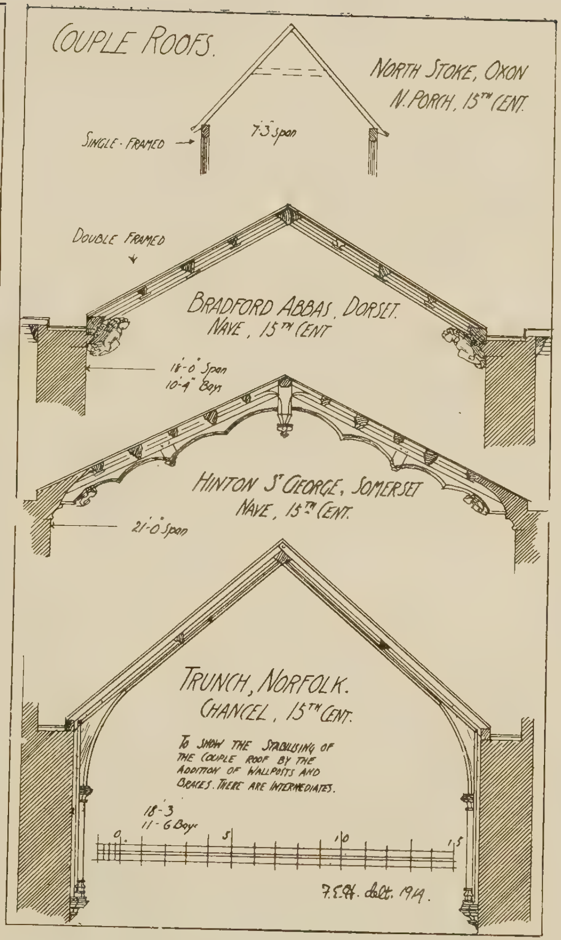
A high-pitched form of post and beam roof occurs all over the Midland and Eastern district, but is commonest in the south-eastern counties. All the rafters are provided with collars, and generally with braces in addition. The beams, well cambered in most instances, and fitted with braces and wall posts in many of the later examples, support tall king-posts treated as shafts with moulded capitals and bases which carry a collar purlin, the span of which is reduced by braces rising from the post. Other braces from the pair of rafters directly over the beam or from the beam itself serve to steady the king-post. The picturesque type of roof was in use in very early times, and examples which may be reasonably assigned to the thirteenth century are not infrequent. Very ancient examples abound in Kent and Sussex. An East Anglian version is seen at Barking.

Thrusting Roofs.—While mediæval beam roofs were generally double-framed, thrusting roofs are commonly met with in both single and double framed varieties. There are two main types, the *couple* and the *collar*, both very nearly akin to the arch, and all the mediæval improvements tended to bring out their arch character more and more distinctly.

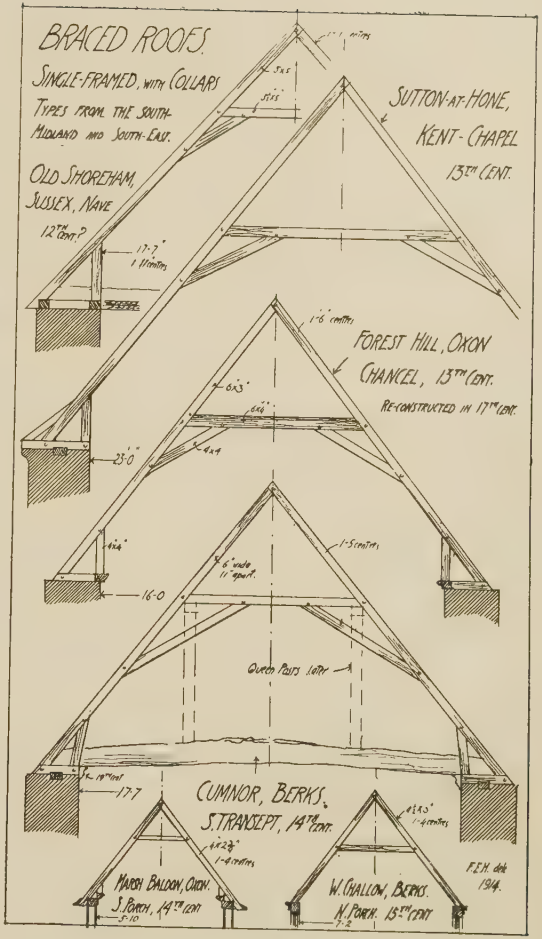
The single-framed couple roof is not often found, except in very small buildings such as porches. Even when it does occur, it is generally found that collars have been added afterwards to prevent collapse, as in the north porch of North Stoke, Oxon. (96). The double-framed version is sometimes found in the south of Somerset, as at Hinton St George (96), and in Dorset, at Bradford Abbas (96), where the underside of the roof is treated in the usual local manner by division into square panels with richly moulded beams. Such a roof exercised great outward thrust, and tended to push the plate off the wall. The remedy, an invention of the East Anglian carpenters, was to introduce a wall post and brace at the foot of each principal, clipping



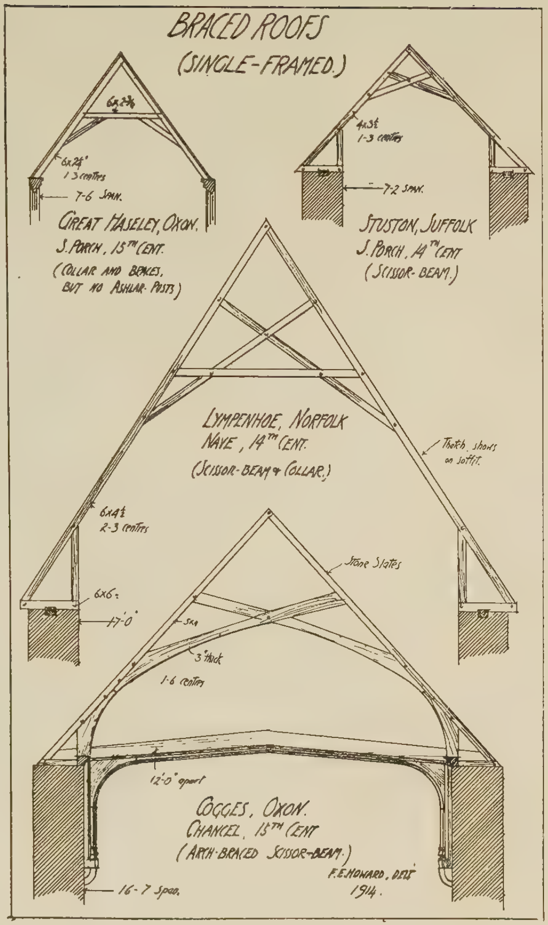
POST AND BEAM ROOFS

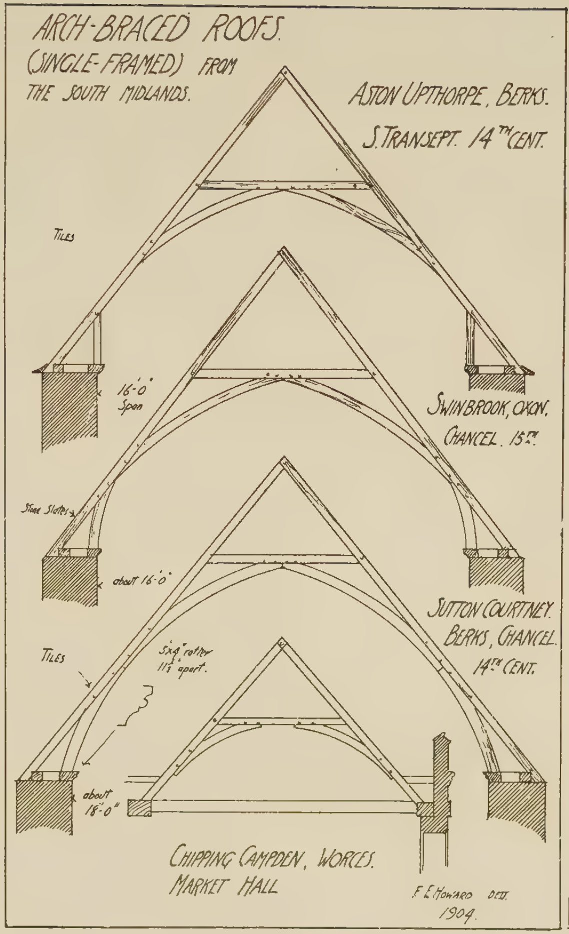


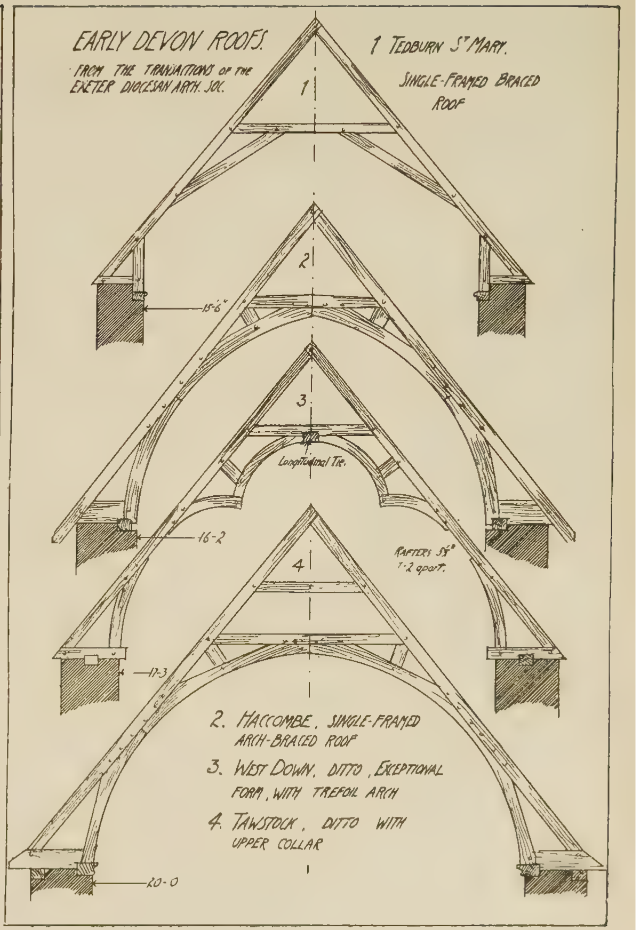
COUPLE ROOFS



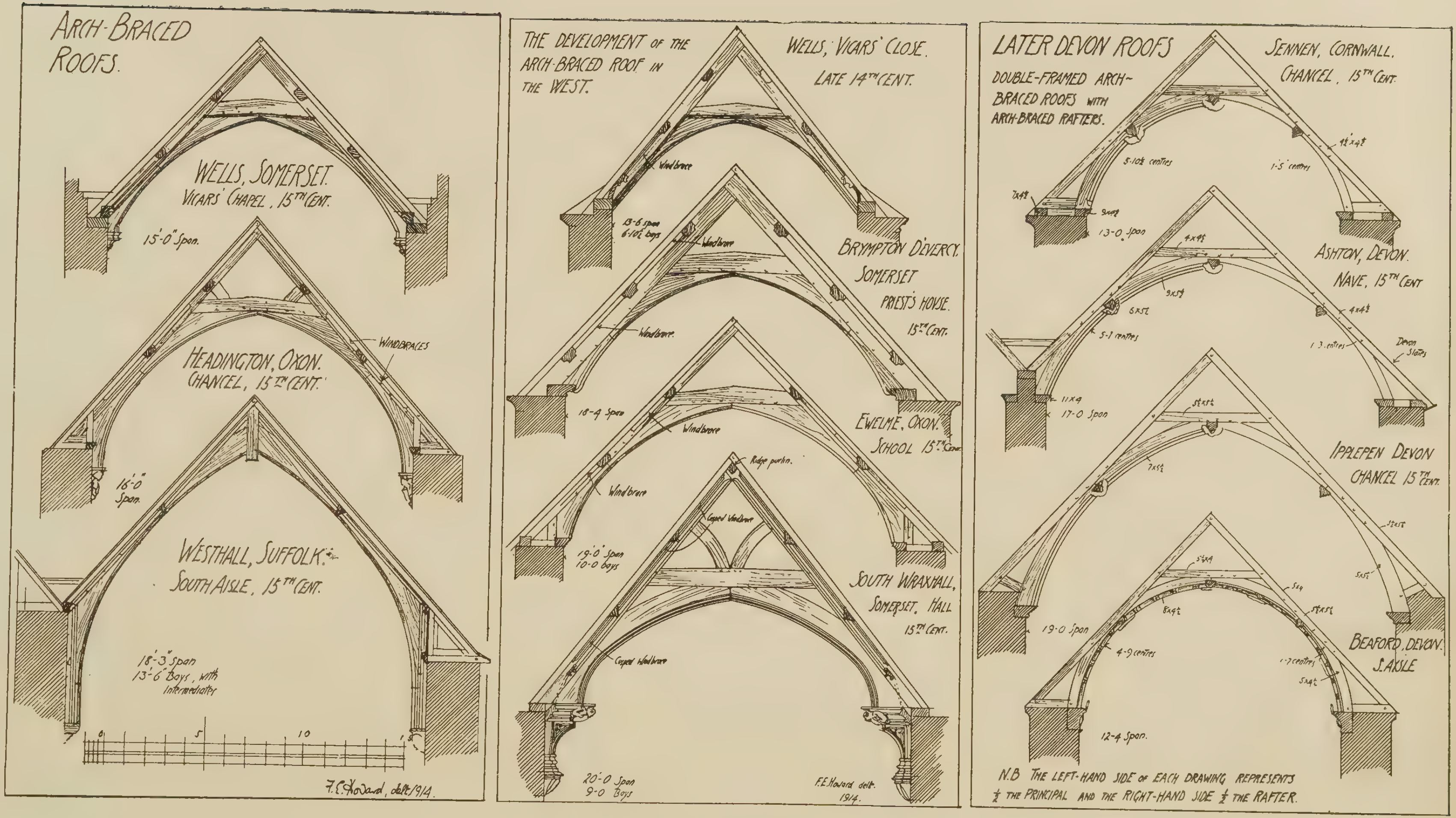
BRACED ROOFS






EARLY DEVON ROOFS.
FROM THE TRANSACTIONS OF THE EXETER DIOCESAN ARCH. SOC.
1 TEDBURN ST MARY.
SINGLE-FRAMED BRACED ROOF
1
2
3
4
15-6"
16-2
17-3
20-0
Longitudinal Tie.
RAFTERS 5½"
1-2 apart.
2. HACCOMBE, SINGLE-FRAMED ARCH-BRACED ROOF
3. WEST DOWN, DITTO, EXCEPTIONAL FORM, WITH TREFOIL ARCH
4. TAWSTOCK, DITTO WITH UPPER COLLAR

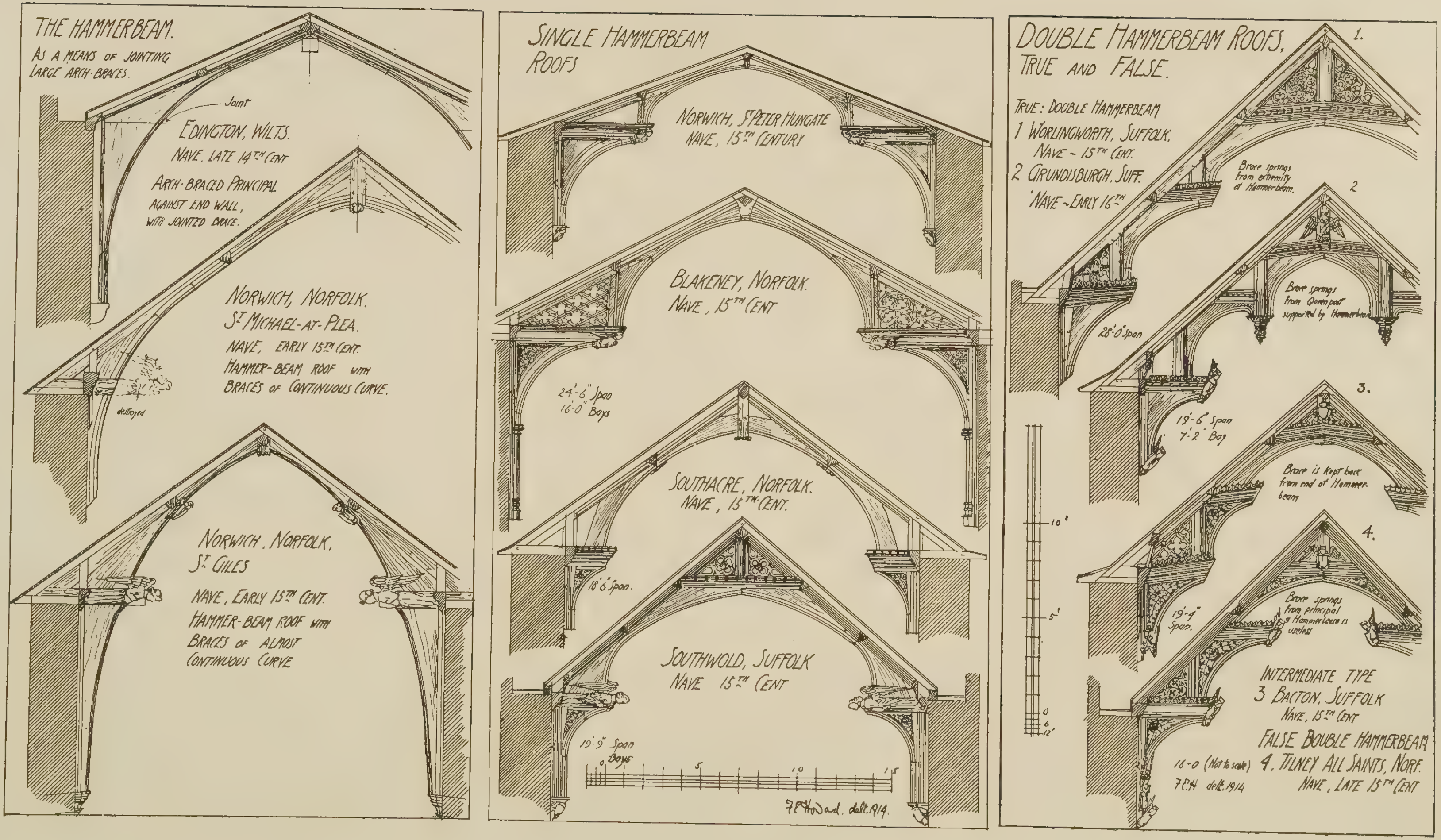
BRACED ROOFS



ARCH-BRACED ROOFS

the roof to the wall and bringing down the thrust to a lower level, where the abutment was more stable, as at Middleton (119). As time went on the wall post was elongated, and in the clerestory roof of Sall, Norfolk, the wall posts are actually tenoned into the ends of the aisle beams, which protrude through the wall for the purpose, thus ensuring that the thrust shall be carried across to the aisle buttresses. These couple roofs with wall post required large braces to keep the posts and rafters at the same rigid angle with one another, and as timber of such width was not easy to obtain, it was sometimes necessary to make a horizontal joint, as at Edington, Wilts. (100). The jointing was greatly improved by the introduction of a beam projecting from the wall into which the rafter, wall post, and the two sections of the brace were framed, as in the roof of St Michael-at-Plea, Norwich (100). This beam is now generally known as a hammer-beam. It was soon found that the upper and lower sections of the brace need not necessarily be of the same curve. The hammer-beam was allowed to project more and more, and the braces were brought to the very end of it, so that the curve of the arch was naturally bent into a trefoiled outline. This method of construction keeps the rafter and the wall post at an extremely rigid angle, and ensures that no thrust shall be exercised at the wall-plate level. Thus the hammer-beam roof of the Norfolk type, illustrated by St Peter Hungate, Norwich (122), and Blakeney (122), was evolved.

So far only the construction at the feet of the rafters has been considered, but there are a few improvements to the jointing at the head of the rafters that call for notice. The head of the rafters was sometimes widened in a curve completing that of the lower braces, and offering a better opportunity for the tenon joint, as in the roof of St Peter Hungate, Norwich. Another method, seen in the chancel roof at Tattershall (121), was to provide a little arched elbow-piece, framed and pegged to both the rafters. A pendant post was sometimes dropped from the apex, as at Westhall (121), to assist in making a secure joint, and to afford a springing for upper braces, stiffening the rafters, as at Southacre (12), or for braces supporting the ridge purlin. At Blakeney and Trunch, Norfolk, a wedge-shaped piece of timber



HAMMER-BEAM ROOFS

is employed instead of a post, affording excellent shoulders for the rafters to butt against.

These descendants of the couple roof are by no means common, except in a few districts, for it is a daring type, requiring great care in design and construction, and offering few advantages—practical or artistic. The couple roofs of Somerset (96), and the wonderful arch-braced and hammer-beam roofs of Norfolk (100), give a certain impression of insecurity that is hardly to be commended. One is astounded at the audacity of poising a roof without any attempt at trussing upon a wall pierced by numerous closely spaced windows, carried on a series of slender piers. Were it not for the clever design of the aisle roofs, which are real flying buttresses in wood, such a method of construction would be impossible. However, it is impossible to deny that the austere grace of such Norfolk roofs of the couple type as Banningham, Worstead, or St Stephen's, Norwich, is as attractive as the more ornate beauty of the roofs of the collar type which abound in Suffolk.

The *Collar Roof* in its single-framed form was often used over timber porches, or in combination with beam and king-post principals, as in the very ancient roofs at New Shoreham, Sussex. The collar was intended to prevent the bending of the rafters under the weight of the roof and the pressure of the wind, and was naturally most effective when fixed midway between the wall plate and the apex, dividing the rafter into two equal parts. A series of collars in this position sensibly reduces the apparent height of the building, so the collars were generally fixed at least two-thirds of the way up. The lower span of the rafter was strutted by short inclined braces from the collar. An alternative solution, not often employed, was to substitute for the collar and braces a couple of braces crossing one another, called scissor beams (97). In this form of roof each pair of rafters was practically supported upon an arch built up of straight timbers, and the curving of the braces to produce a true arch was a very natural development. Roofs with straight braces, as at Dennington, which are generally known as trussed rafter roofs, are better described as single-framed braced roofs, while those with curved braces should be called single-framed arch-braced roofs. The treatment of the feet of the rafters is interesting. They generally pitched on the outer edge of the wall, either on an outer wall plate or on a series of transverse plates, called sole pieces, while posts known as ashlar pieces, in the same plane as the inside of the wall, carried a proportion of the weight down to the inner wall plate. Thus each of the rafters was provided with a triangular foot, distributing the strain over the entire thickness of the wall. In many early roofs a single central plate was substituted for the pair of plates, and the sole pieces were notched over it. Both methods are combined in many cases. The braced roof is common over the whole of the country, except in the West. In the West Midlands and Wales the arch-braced roof is more common, while in Devon, Cornwall, and the west of Somerset an elaborate double-framed version (98) was evolved, apparently long before the fifteenth century. Every fourth or fifth pair of rafters was increased in size and strength, and the effect was transmitted to the lesser rafters by means of little purlins, whose mouldings mitred with those of the principals. Burrington (117) is a good illustration of this Devon variety, while Llanrhaiadr (118) is an exceptionally fine example of the Welsh type.

The great majority of the braced roofs are very plain, and the wall plates are often the only members to receive even mouldings. The moulding of the wall plate is often the only criterion of date. In the fifteenth century the rafters were sometimes boarded over and panelled out with little applied mouldings, carved bosses covering their intersections. It often happens that only the bays above the altar or the rood are so treated, while the rest of the rafters are left exposed. This treatment can only be regarded as a success when the boarding, which offers splendid opportunities to the painter, is decorated in colour. In Somerset, where the braces are generally of curved outline, the boarded treatment was commonly adopted, but the applied mouldings were larger, and cut the surface up into smaller panels. At Banwell there is a very characteristic example, while at Shepton Mallet (118) there is a wonderful arch-braced roof in which the local treatment of deep mouldings and traceried panels of different designs, so often found in the flat roofs of the district, is applied to the curved surface with splendid results. In the double-framed roofs of Devon the decoration is generally confined to the bosses, carved out of thick square blocks, clasping the mouldings, though trails of vine leaves or seaweed are sometimes carved along the wall plates, as at Burrington, or in some instances along the purlins and around the chief braces also, but the latter treatment is more usual in the roofs of Cornwall. The bays of the roof over the rood or the altar were often boarded over between the main timbers, and the panels so formed were enriched with diagonal ribs, edged with dainty crestings, and studded with carved stars, as at Hennock (142). This treatment is applied to the whole of the magnificent roof of Cullompton (117).

The collar type of roof was not so commonly used in the double-framed form. A roof with simple collar-beam principals occurs over the dormitory of Cleeve abbey, Somerset. Such examples are rare, for even in the earliest collar roofs the arch form was generally developed by the addition of arch braces below the collar, forming a segmental arch. Though this form of roof exercises tremendous thrust at the very top of the wall, where it is least fitted to resist the stress, it was in common use in Wales and in the adjoining counties of England. Besides the great thrust there is another grave defect. The whole stability of the roof depends upon the connection of the roof to the wall. In the fourteenth-century roof of the Guest Hall at Worcester an attempt was made to remedy this by tenoning a wall post into the rafter and into a stone corbel, built into the wall a few feet below the plate—a weak solution, since the efficacy of the post depended entirely upon the tenons. The widening or doubling of the wall plates was a slight improvement, affording a chance for the introduction of ashlar pieces or lower braces, or both, and tending to make the roof arches more acute and thus reduce the thrust. As the fifteenth century advanced, the brilliant idea was conceived of boldly projecting the sole piece after the manner of a cantilever and springing the arch from its extremity, instead of from the plate, as at Whitchurch and Llanynys (120). At the same time the sagging of the cantilever was prevented, and the roof principals firmly clipped to the wall, and the thrust brought down much lower by the addition of a bracket or a wall post and brace. This advance in construction—the invention of the hammer-beam—appears to have been developed independently in the East and in the West of England. The hammer-beam roof is one of the strongest and most beautiful forms of roof ever invented.[1]

The system of braced cantilevers was extended in the double hammer-beam roofs, in which the lower brace supports a second hammer-beam, tenoned into the rafter, from which another brace springs to the collar, as at Worlingworth (123) and Grundisburgh. The effect of this construction is magnificent, and the delights of the double tiers of hammer-beams sometimes obscured their real purpose, for there are a number of roofs, of which Woolpit (86) is one of the finest, in which full advantage is not taken of the projection of the upper hammer-beam, which projects uselessly into the empty air, while the upper brace springs from the rafter. These are simply single hammer-beam roofs with an upper range of hammer-beams introduced for effect.

Double-framed collar roofs, whether arch-braced or hammer-beam, are very rare in the northern counties, and are uncommon in the Midlands. In Somerset and the adjoining district they seem to have been regarded as domestic, for though there are many lovely examples in halls, they are extremely rare in churches. Some of the Welsh roofs are very fine; they are of low pitch, with very massive timbers, often cusped. The ashlar pieces of the rafters are boarded over to form a kind of deep panelled cornice, and cusped wind braces, supporting the purlins, decorate the underside of the rafters. The majority have neither wall posts nor lower braces, but Whitchurch (120), Llanynys (120), and many others are fully equipped with hammer-beams and their braces. A similar type of roof abounds in some of the border counties. The East Anglian group includes very many fine roofs, in which the length of the wall posts and the common use of the hammer-beam are the most striking features. The timbers are generally very light, and the curves of the braces are wrought with much refinement and sense of proportion. The construction is more daring, the effect lighter and more graceful, than in any other part of the country, and the architectural details of traceried and foliaged spandrels, moulded timbers, and battlemented or crested cornices are usually far more elegant. Moreover, a lovely effect is produced in very many roofs by poising carved angels with widespread wings upon every point of vantage. The sober roofs of the Midlands, destitute of all ornament save mouldings, are a striking contrast to these splendid triumphs of mediæval craftsmanship.

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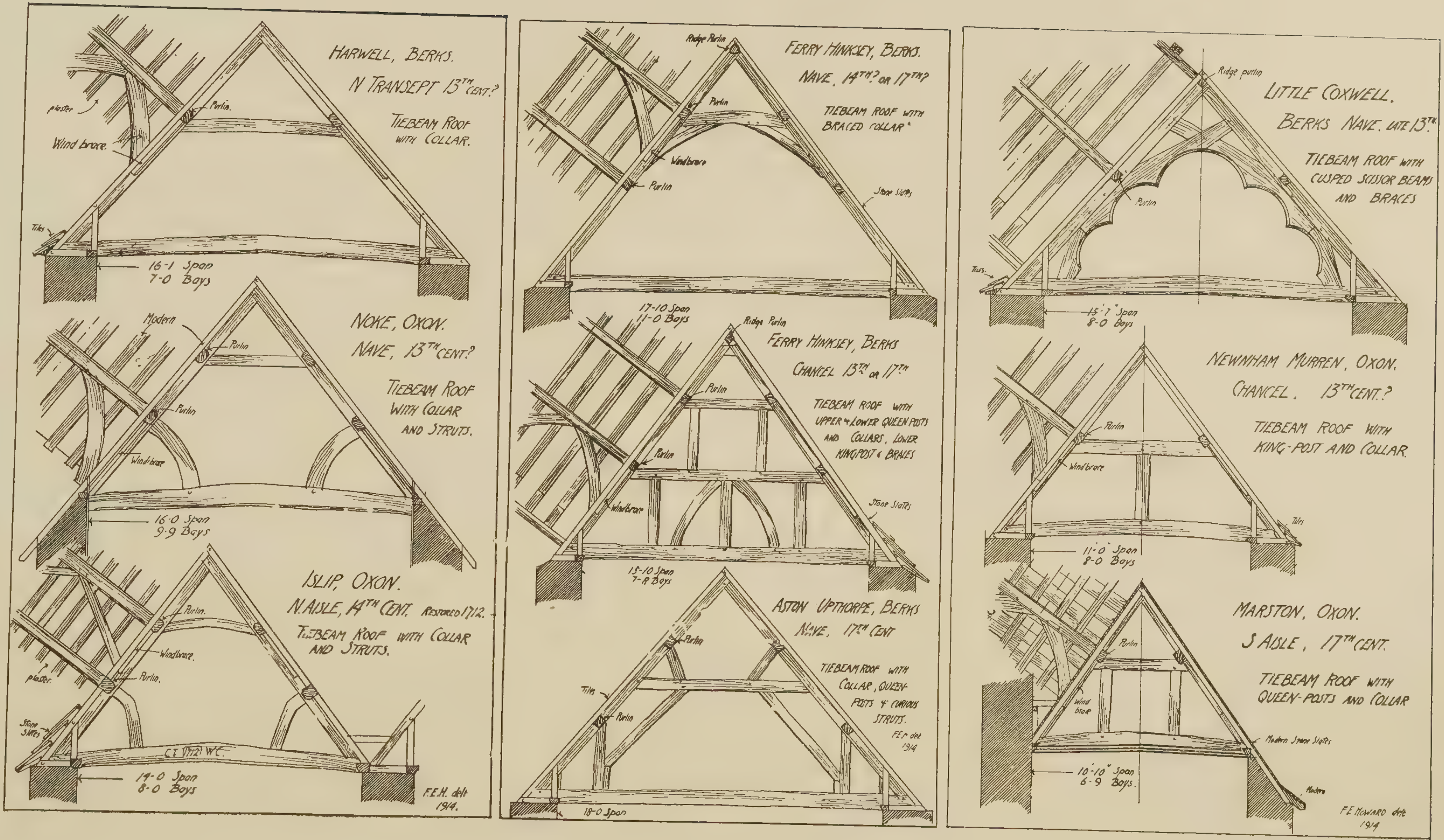
[1] The hammer-beam is first employed in the roof of Westminster Hall, about 1380, to meet the extraordinary difficulties of getting large timbers to roof a span of eighty feet. The roof is exceptional in every way, being a compound roof, divided into a nave and aisles, supported on great transverse arches instead of longitudinal arcades. In the Westminster roof the chief member of the principal is a great two-centered arch, divided into sections by the hammer-beams and the queen posts. The latter are dropped from a point very near the intersection of the collar and the rafters. These features are represented in the London group of hall roofs of the hammer-beam type, but do not occur in the roofs of parish churches. It is therefore certain that the latter are not inspired by the Westminster roof, but were the inevitable outcome of the development of the arch-braced roof.

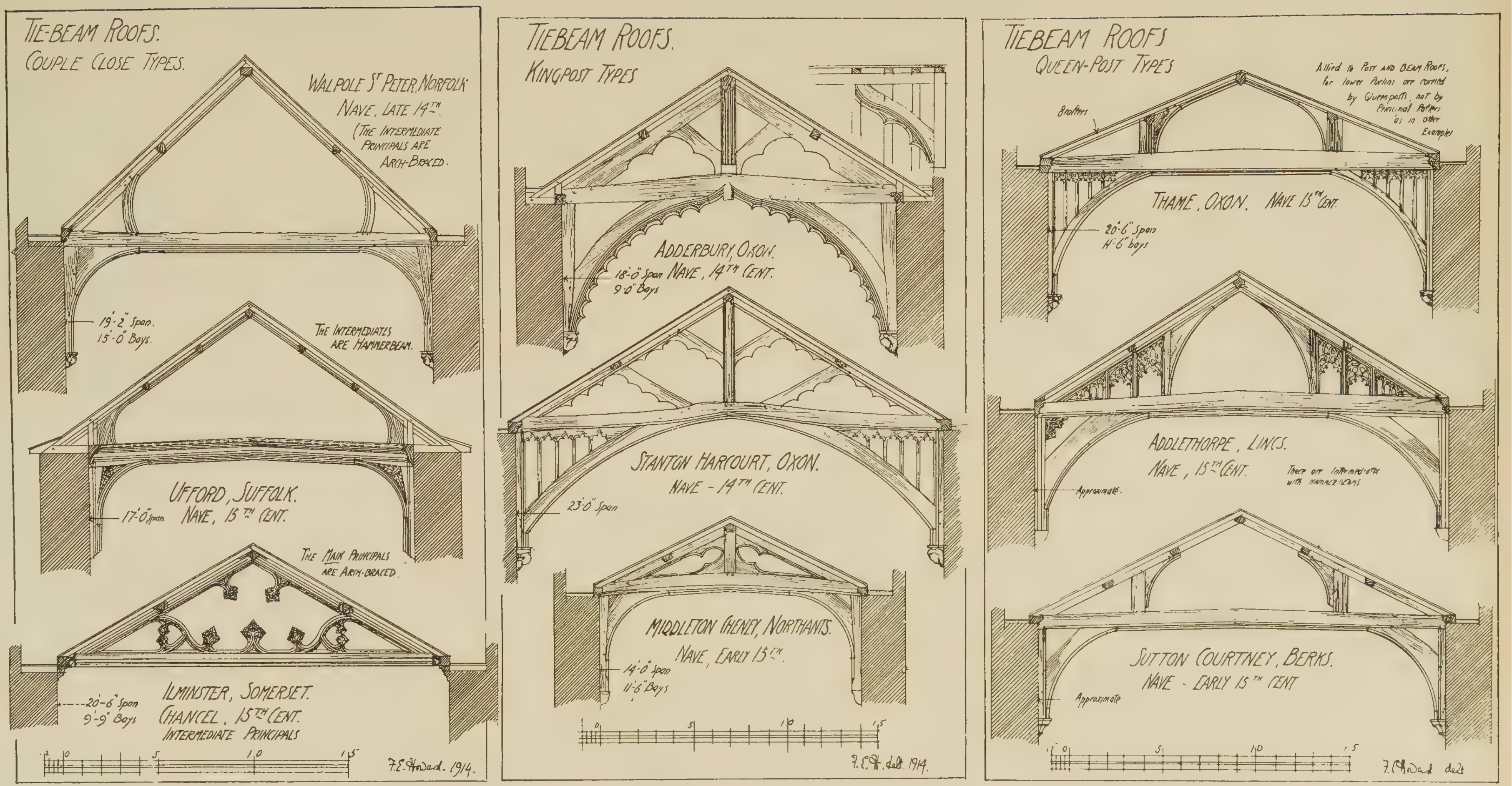
Trussed Roofs.—All mediæval tie-beam roofs are of the double framed type, and therefore have principals and purlins.

The problem of the sagging of the beam was met by the introduction of arch braces and wall posts, as in the case of beam roofs, while the settlement of the rafters was prevented by the use of collars or posts, sometimes in connection with arch braces, or struts, rising to the rafters in an outward direction. In the earlier work this framework of timbers was generally cusped, so that the openings were of a foliated shape, but in work of the fifteenth century they were generally filled in with tracery, cut out of very thin boards.

Somerset possesses a lovely group of tie-beam roofs, of which St Cuthbert's, Wells (124), is typical. The timbers are of great size, especially the king-posts and tie-beams, which are exquisitely moulded and enriched with carved paterae and deep crestings of elaborate design. The great king-post is usually flanked by a range of lesser posts on either side, filling in the triangle above the beam with a kind of grille, each of the openings having a traceried head. A few mid-Somerset



TIE-BEAM ROOFS



TIE-BEAM ROOFS

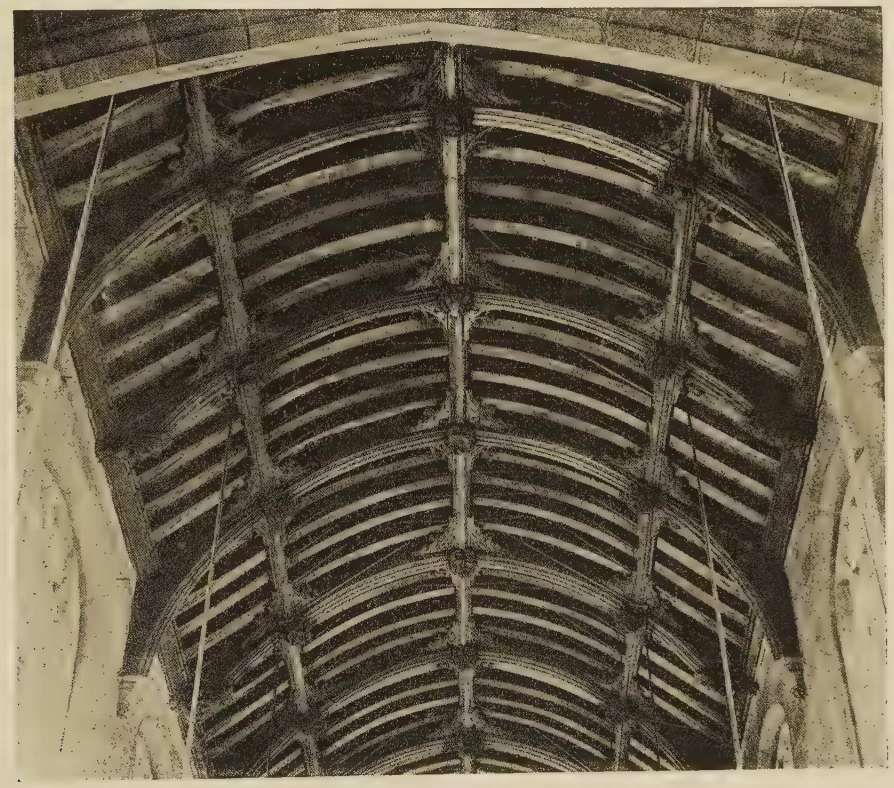
examples, including Bruton (126), have curved struts rising from the king-posts to the rafters, and the curious openings thus formed are filled with rather coarse tracery. At Wellow (111), the triangles above the beam are panelled up and carved in the solid with foliage. As in other Somerset roofs, the wall posts and arch braces are of small importance, though they are often richly moulded with carved or traceried spandrels.

In East Anglia there are several tie-beam roofs in which practically no effort is made to fill in the space between the tie-beam and the rafter (120), as at Walsham-le-Willows (125) and Ufford (125). In such a case, the strain on the joint between the foot of the rafter and the tie-beam is considerable, owing to the thrust of the former. The strain is sometimes distributed by the introduction of an ashlar piece and a brace. These tended to be brought nearer and nearer together, producing the queen-post roof. An important group of these is found in the Fen district, and occurs in Norfolk, Cambridgeshire, and Lincolnshire, as at Addlethorpe (124). They are similar in some ways to the king-post roofs of Somerset, but are altogether lighter and lacier in effect. The beams, moulded and enriched with crestings, have angels applied to them at intervals, and are supported by great arch braces of four-centered outline, which are often carved with foliage or grotesques, while the spandrels are filled in with tracery and are sometimes subdivided by little posts. A pair of light queen-posts, connected by a pair of arch braces supporting the apex of the rafters, is a very characteristic feature, while the triangles remaining on either hand are divided by slender moulded uprights into vertical panels with lightly traceried heads.

Both king- and queen-post roofs frequently occur in the Midlands, but in a plainer and simplified form. The ornament is usually reduced to a minimum, except in a few cases, such as the roof over the present cathedral church at Oxford (126), which recalls the work of Somerset. Many of the more important roofs of Bucks. and the adjoining counties approach those of the Fens in refinement, if not in elaboration.

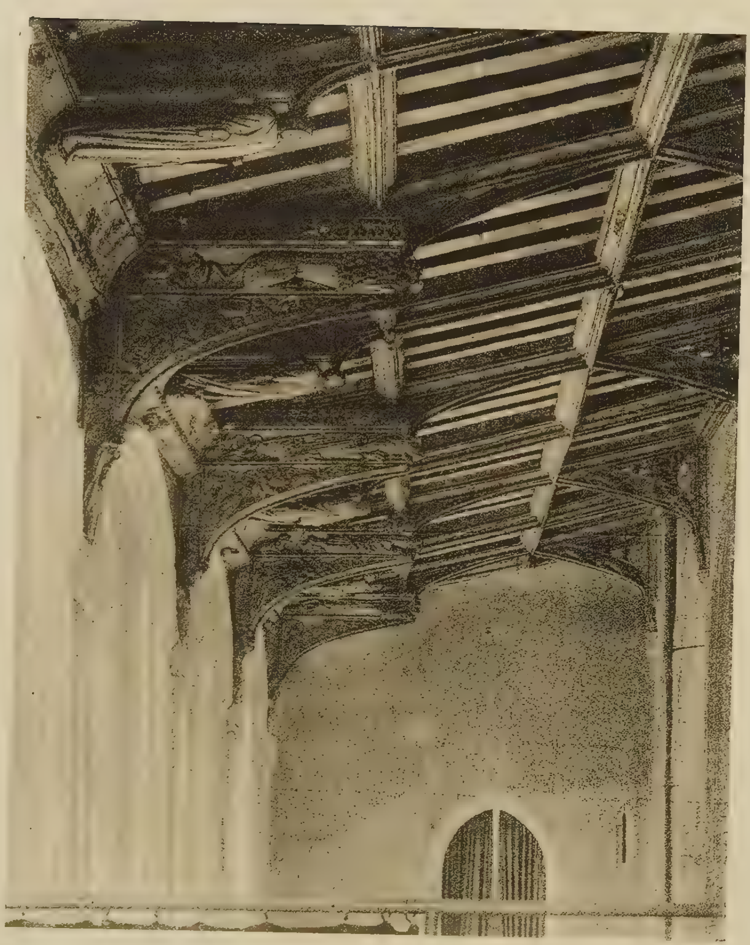
The climax of English roof construction may be seen in the astonishing roof of the nave of Needham Market, Suffolk (129).

Derived from the single hammer-beam roofs of the district, it contains in itself all the features of a complete church; for though in a single span, it is planned with nave and aisles, the posts which take the place of the nave piers being supported in mid-air upon the ends of great hammer-beams. The central section is designed with an almost flat cambered beam roof, between the principals of which clerestory windows are ingeniously contrived. The chief feature of the side sections is the cornice, of enormous projection, which supports unusually tall ashlar pieces, representing the outer walls of the church. The whole structure, which is chiefly noticeable for its clever conception, rather than for its beauty, apparently depends for its stability upon the lower series of beams. These are actual tensional members, while the upper beams are in compression. Provided the joints do not fail, there should be not the slightest thrust from this remarkable roof, which is one of the most sensational efforts of the mediæval carpenter.

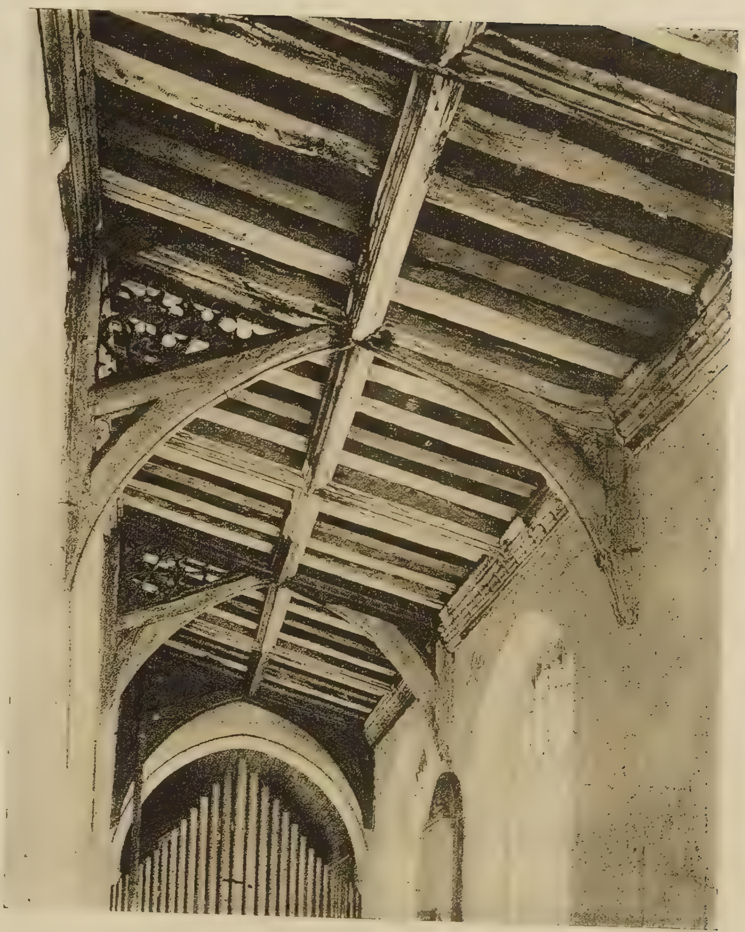


THIRSK, YORKSHIRE, THE NAVE ROOF

AISLE ROOFS—BUTTRESS OR SHORE TYPE

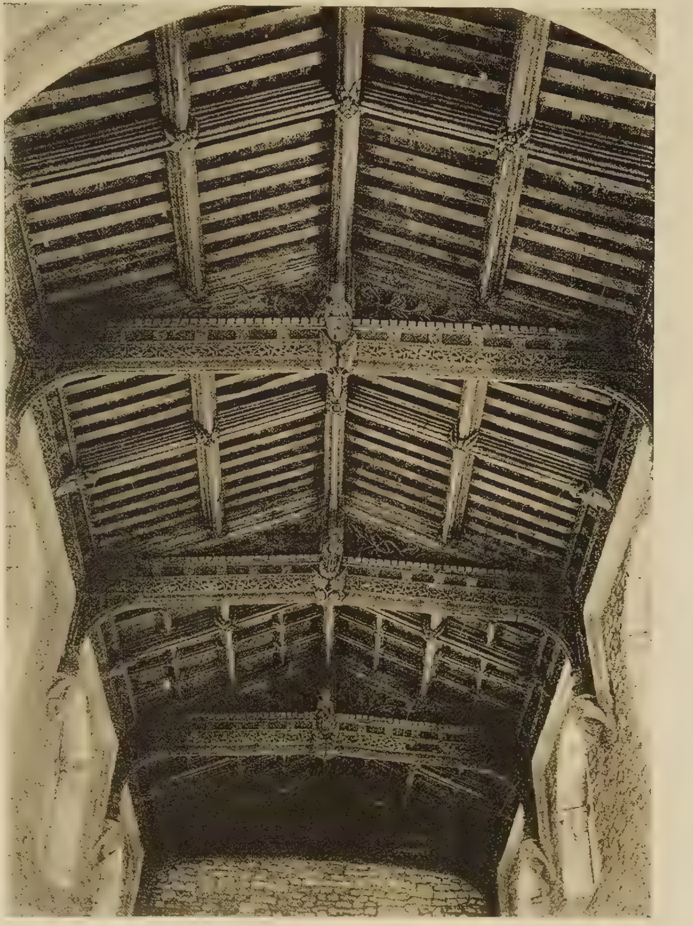


MILDENHALL, SUFFOLK, WITH HAMMER-BEAMS

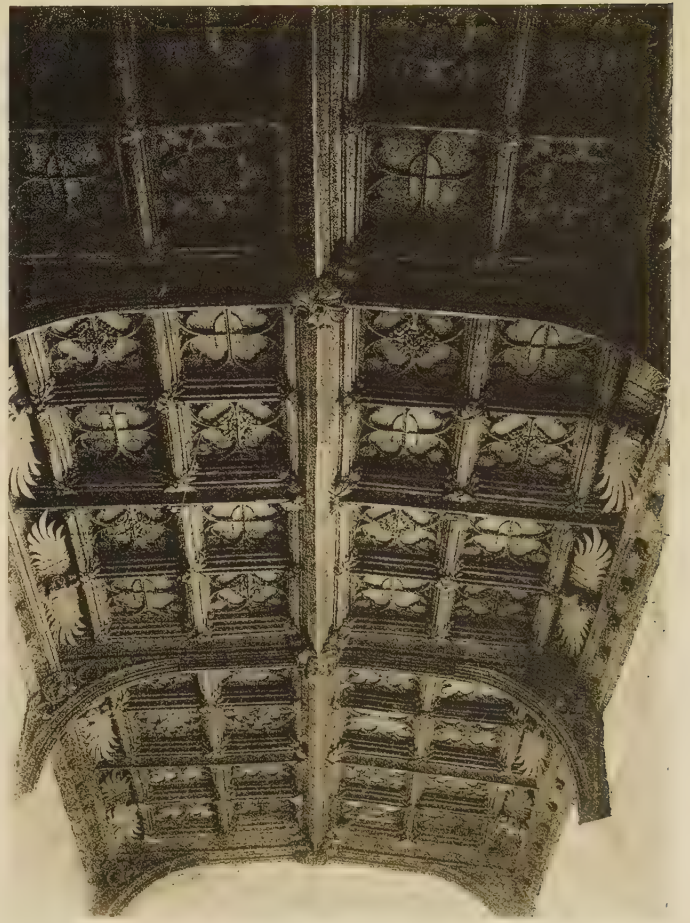


EAST WINCH, NORFOLK, NORMAL EASTERN TYPE

SOMERSET ROOFS—KING-POST AND CAMBERED BEAM TYPES COMPARED

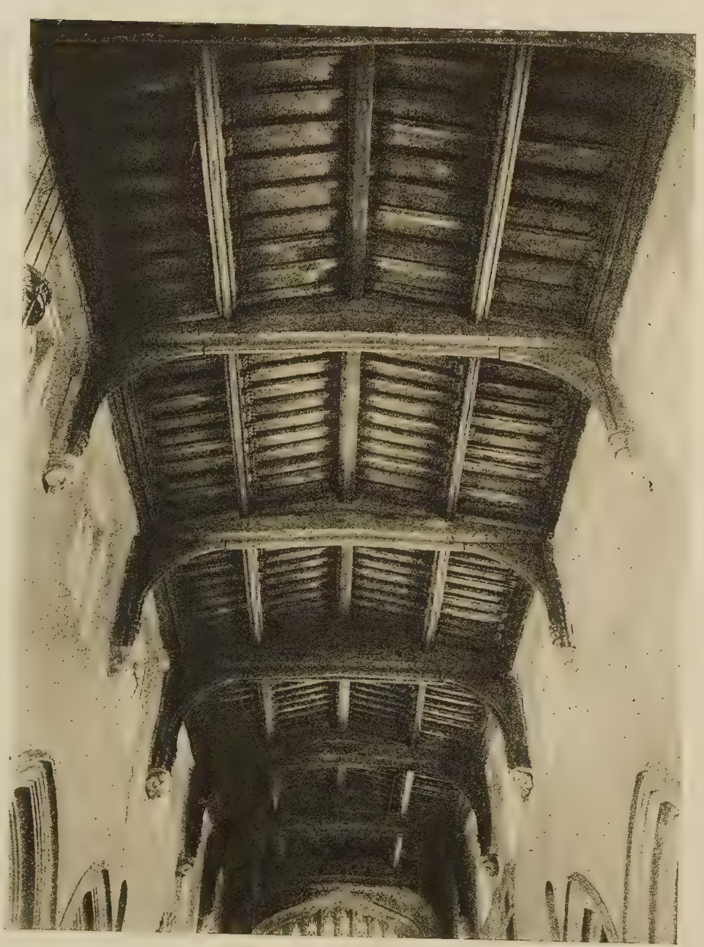


WELLOW, SOMERSET, NAVE

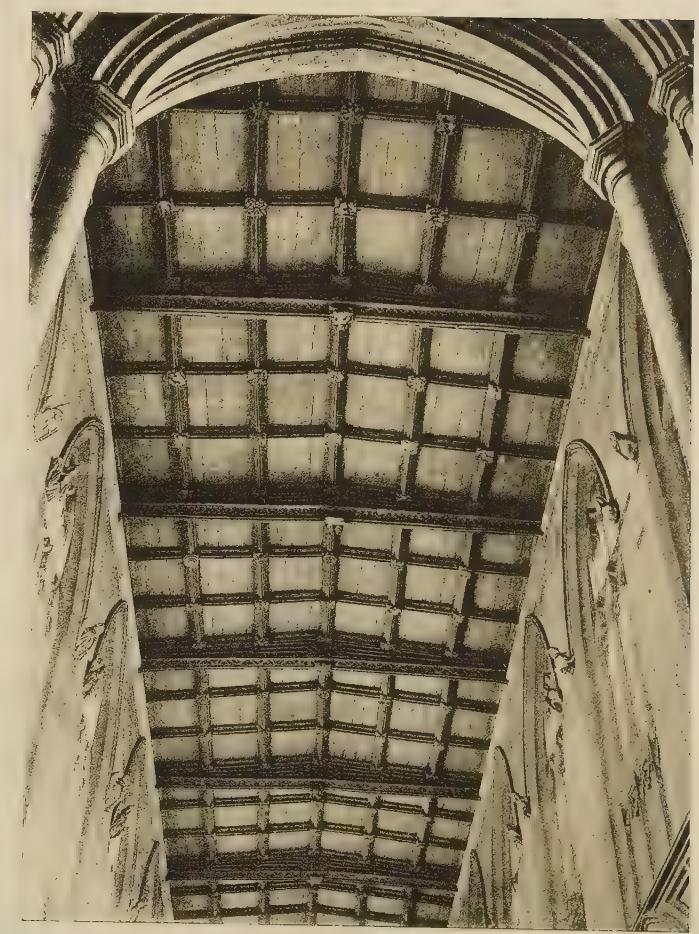


MARK, SOMERSET, AISLE

FIRRED BEAM ROOFS—MIDLAND AND NORTH-EASTERN TYPES COMPARED

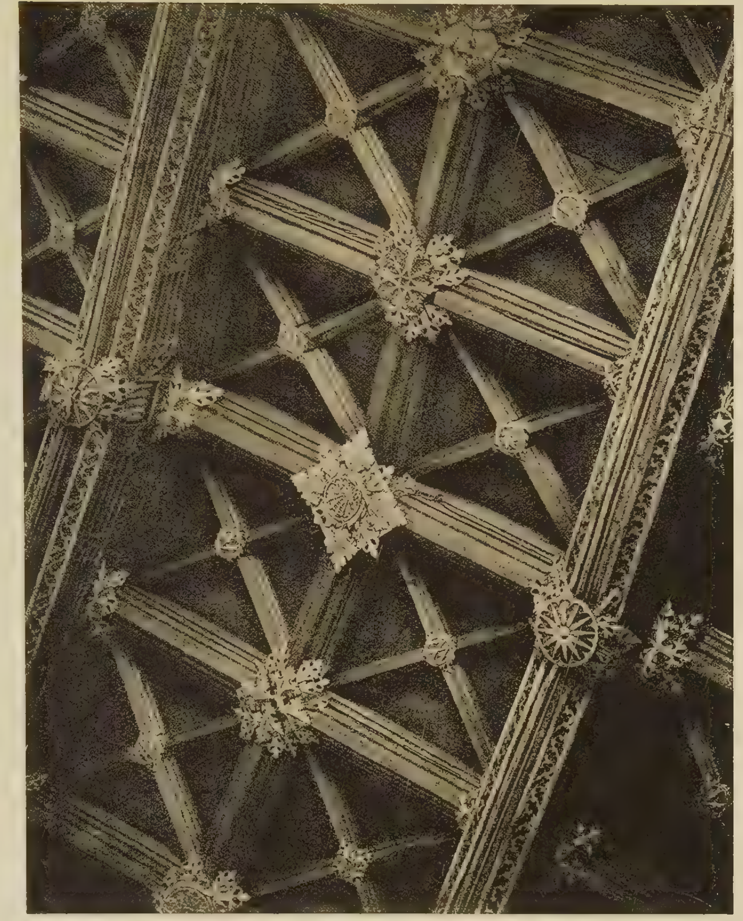


EWELME, OXON

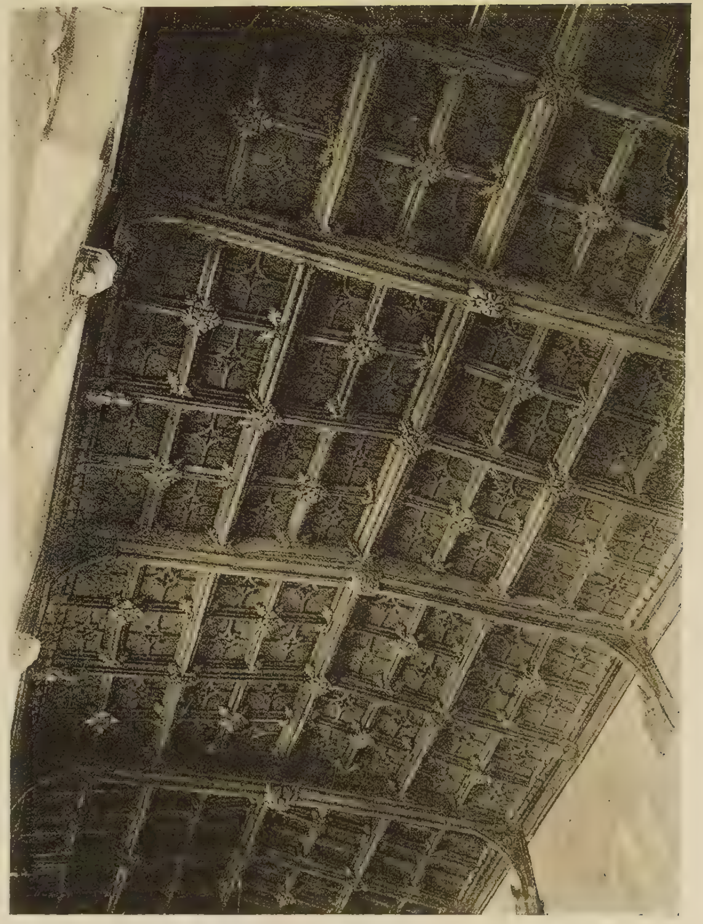


BEVERLEY ST MARY, YORKS.

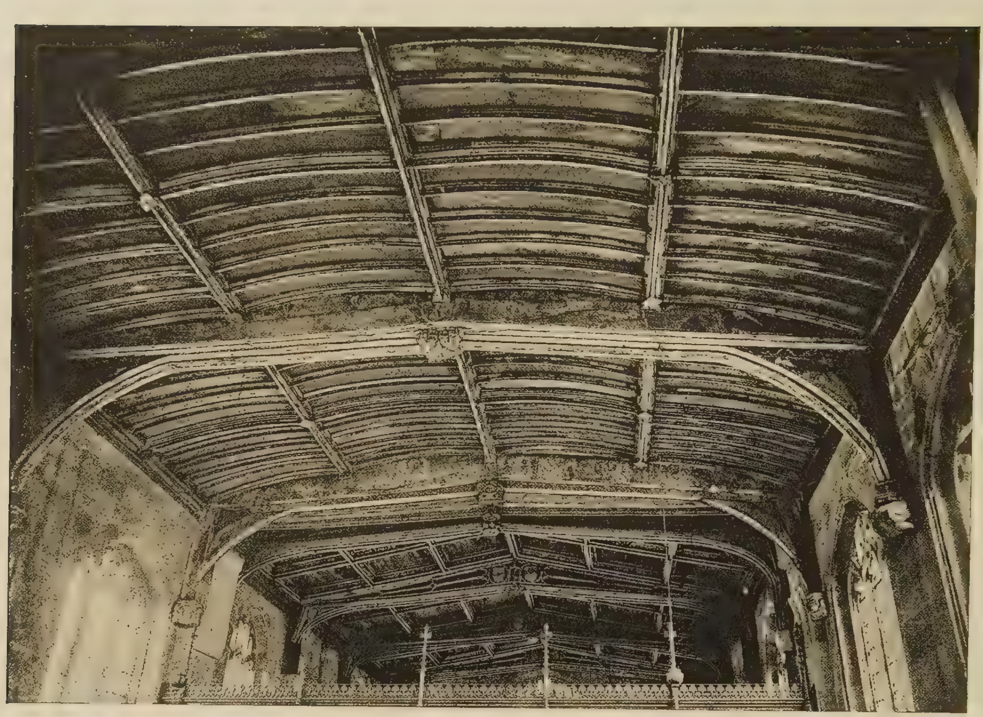
THE FIRRED BEAM ROOF—NORTH-WESTERN TYPE



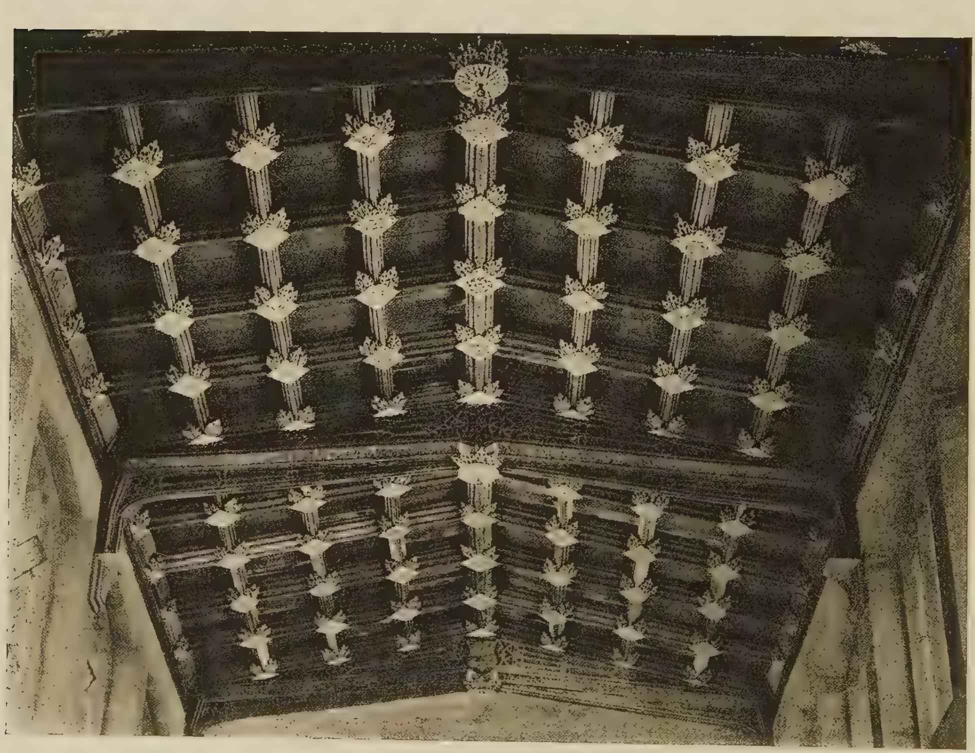
WITTON, CHESHIRE



GRESFORD, DENBIGH

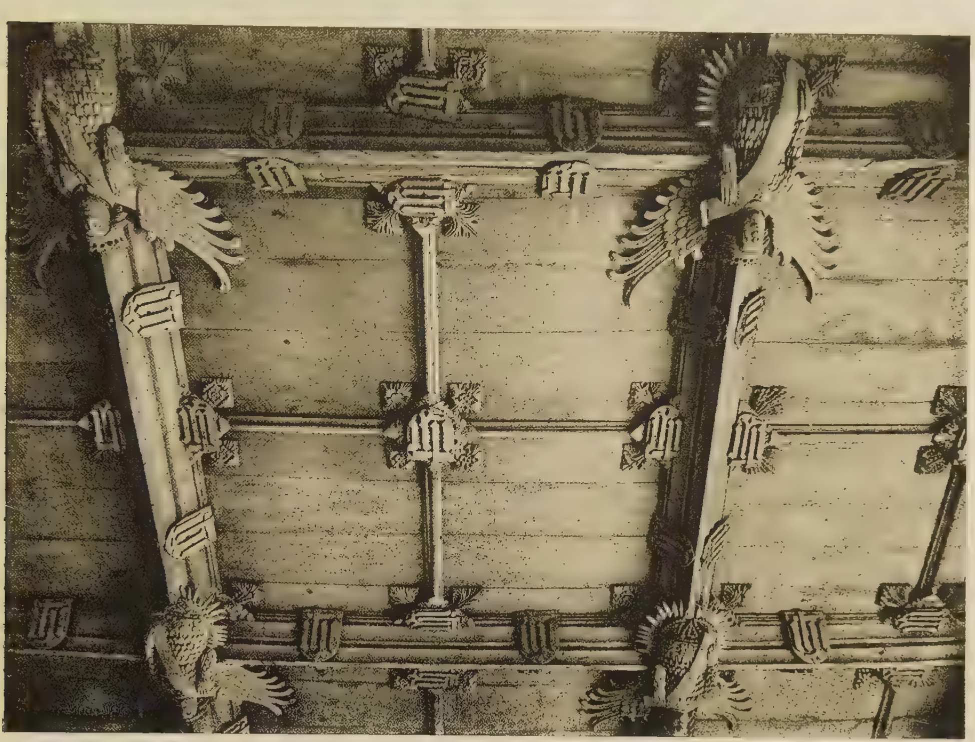


GAWSWORTH, CHESHIRE

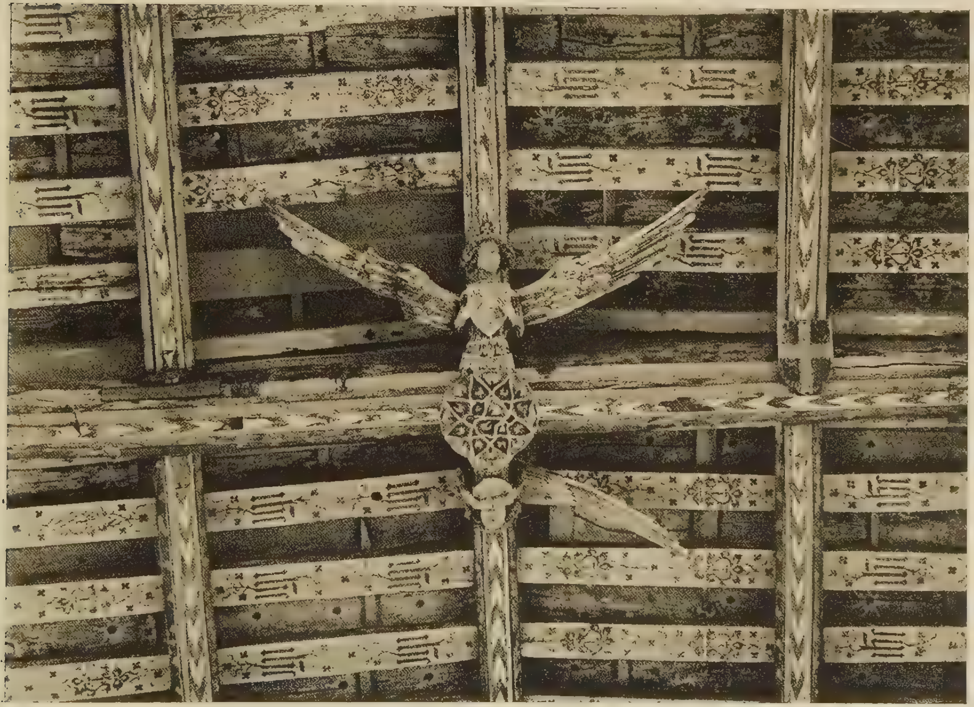


ST MARY'S, CHESTER, NAVE

THE DECORATION OF THE ROOF SURFACE—THE CARVER'S AND PAINTER'S METHODS COMPARED

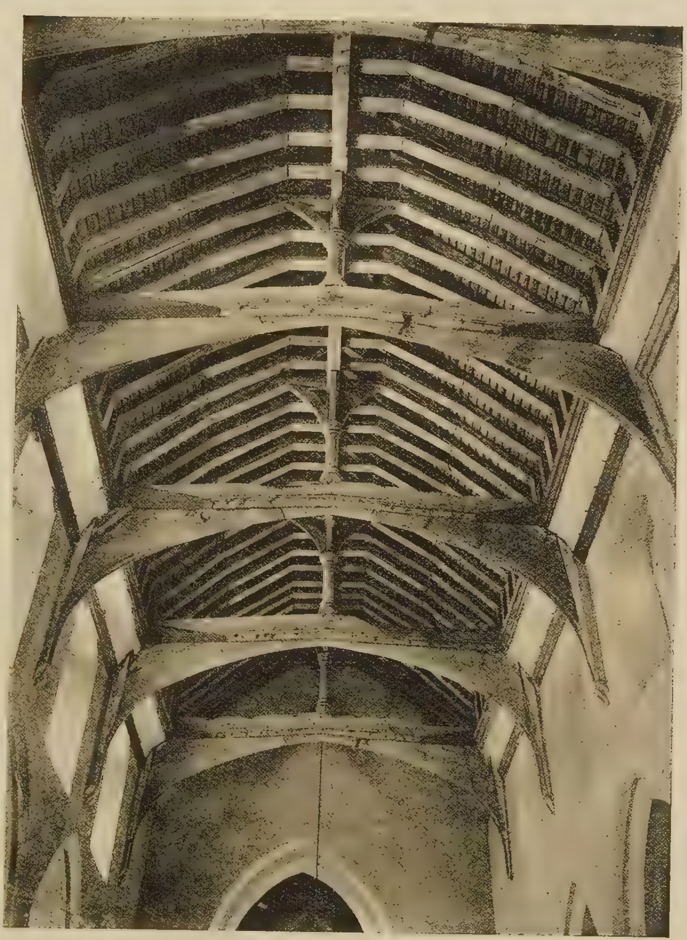


EWELME, OXON, CARVED ROOF OF SOUTH CHAPEL

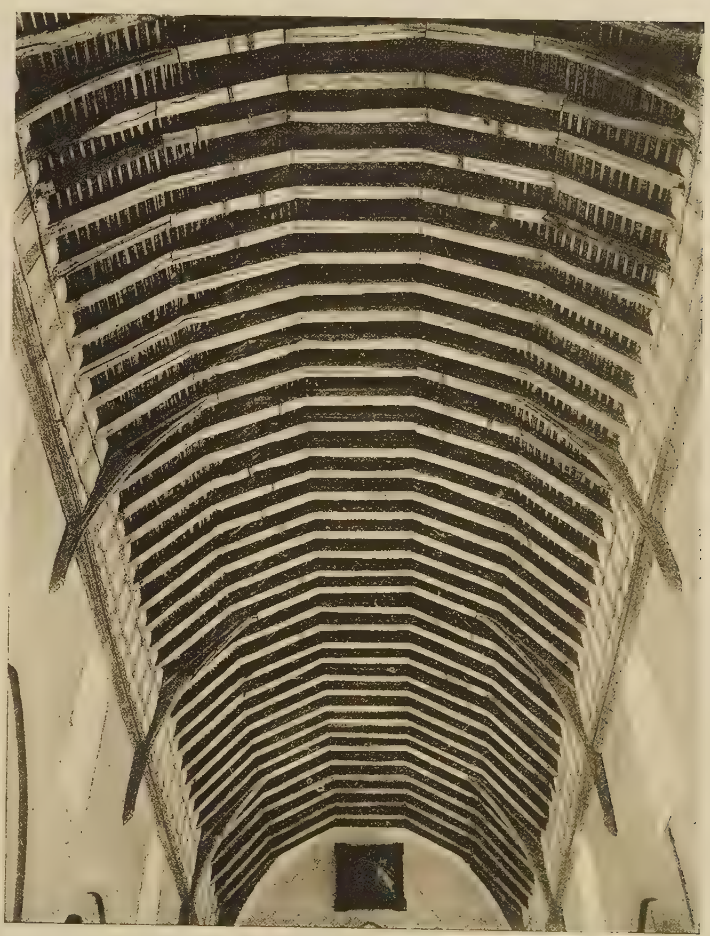


BLYTHBURGH, SUFFOLK, PAINTED ROOF OF NAVE

EARLY ROOFS FROM EAST ANGLIA—POST AND BEAM AND BRACED RAFTER TYPES

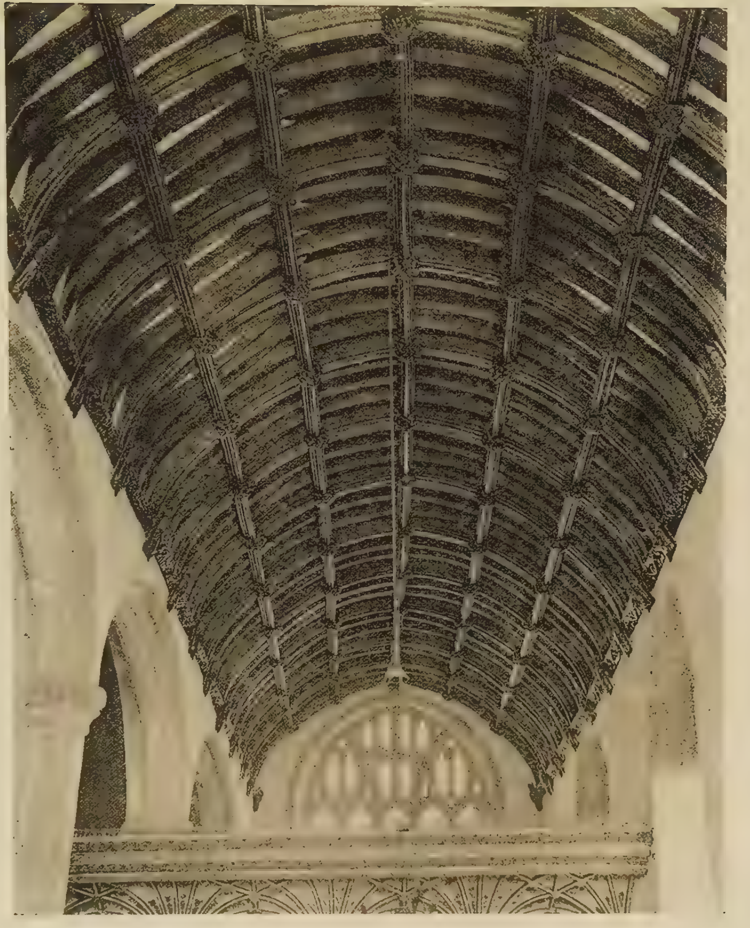


BARKING, SUFFOLK, POST AND BEAM ROOF

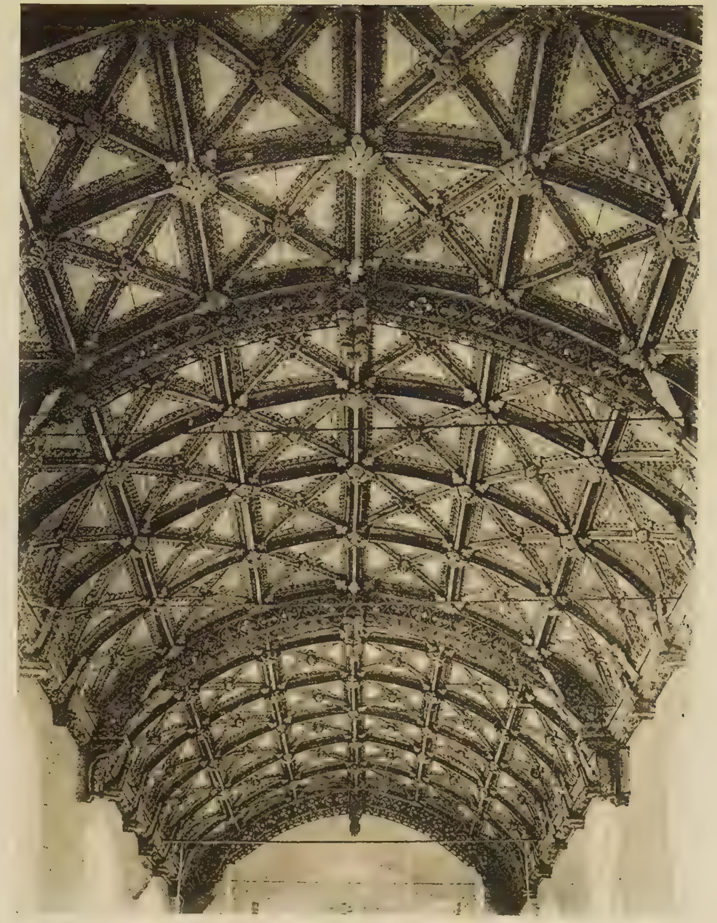


DENNINGTON, SUFFOLK, BRACED RAFTER ROOF

THE DEVON ROOF WITH ARCH-BRACED RAFTERS

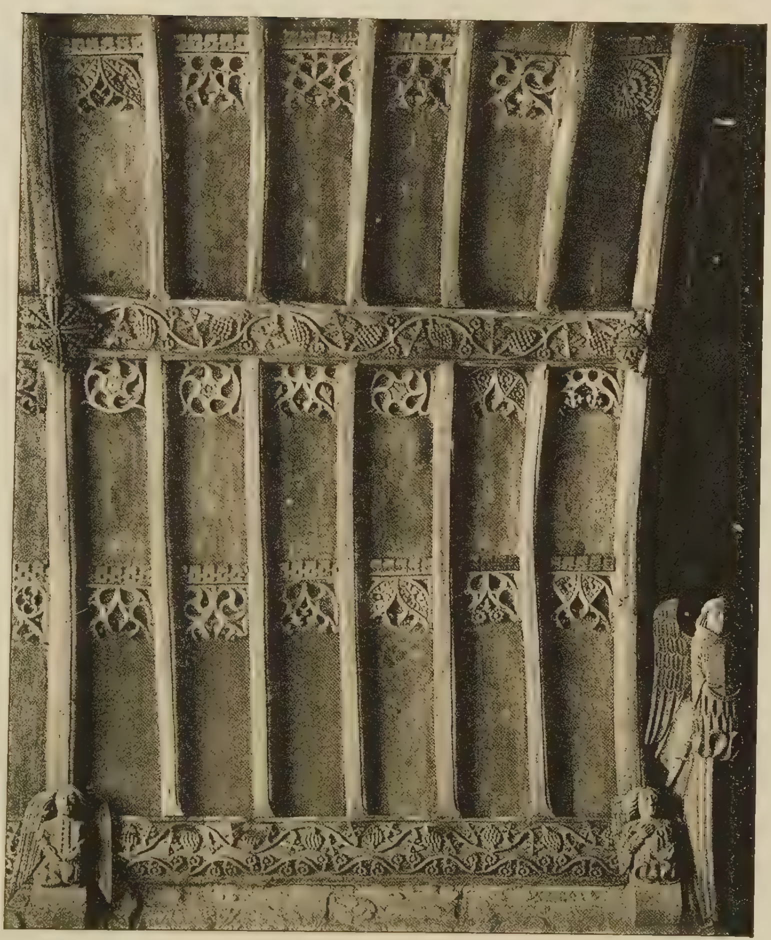


BURRINGTON, DEVON, NORMAL TYPE

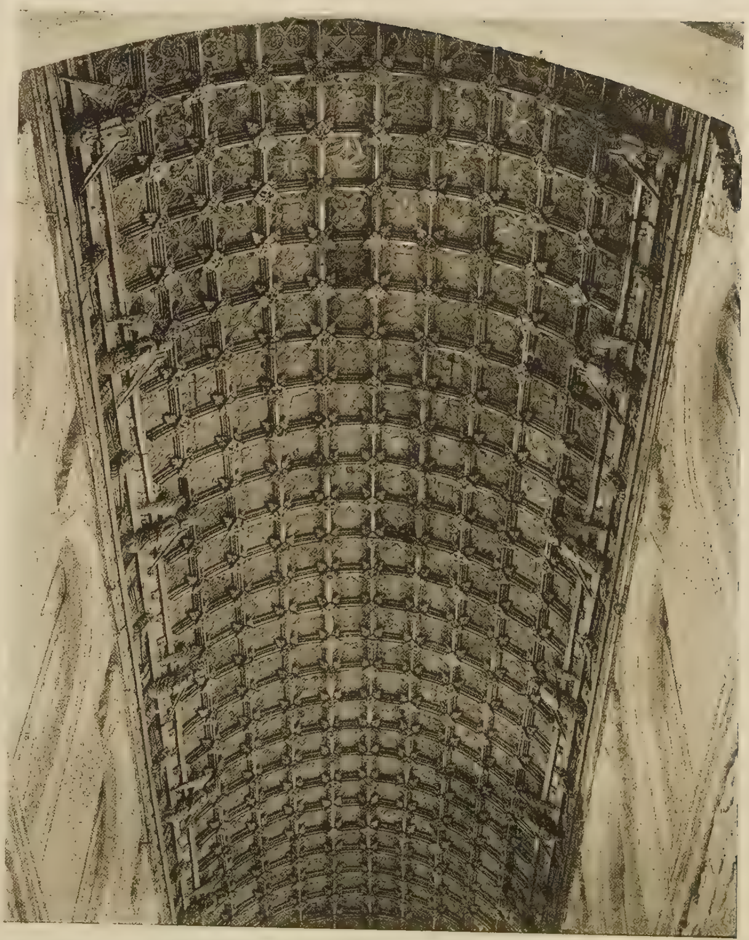


CULLOMPTON, DEVON, ENRICHED TYPE

THE WEST COUNTRY ROOF WITH ARCH-BRACED RAFTERS

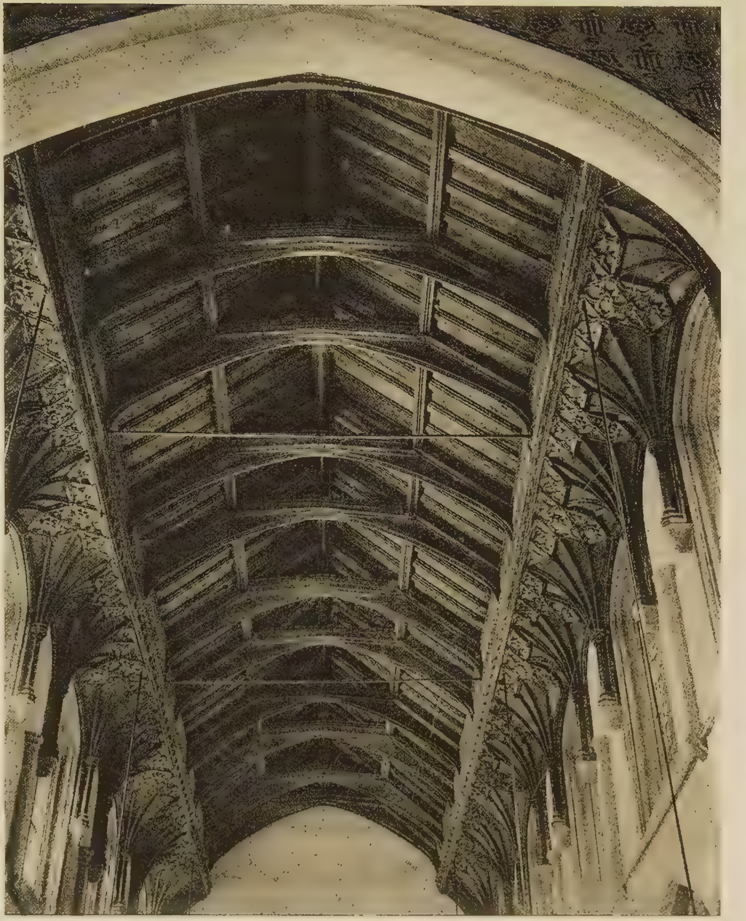


LLANRHAIADR, DENBIGH, WELSH TYPE

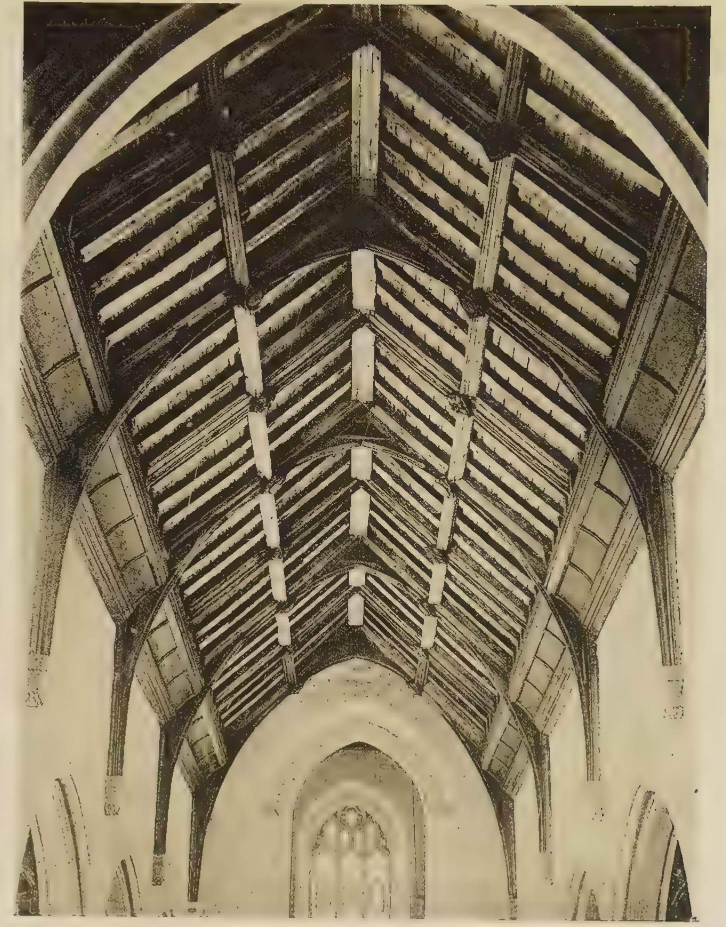


SHEPTON MALLET, SOMERSET, SOMERSET TYPE

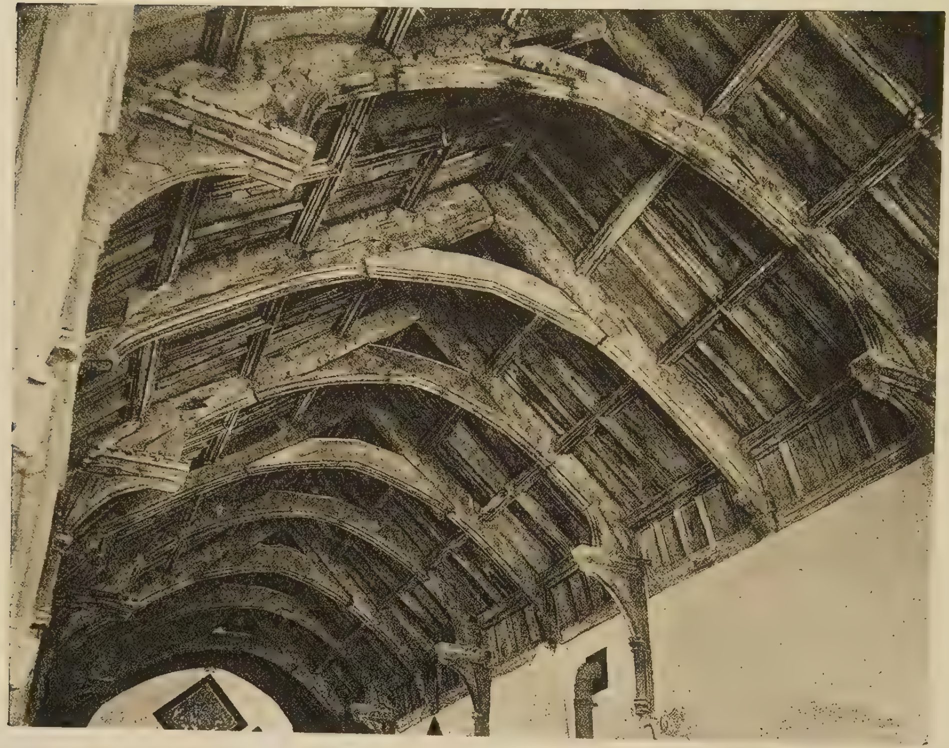
THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CORNICE IN EAST ANGLIA



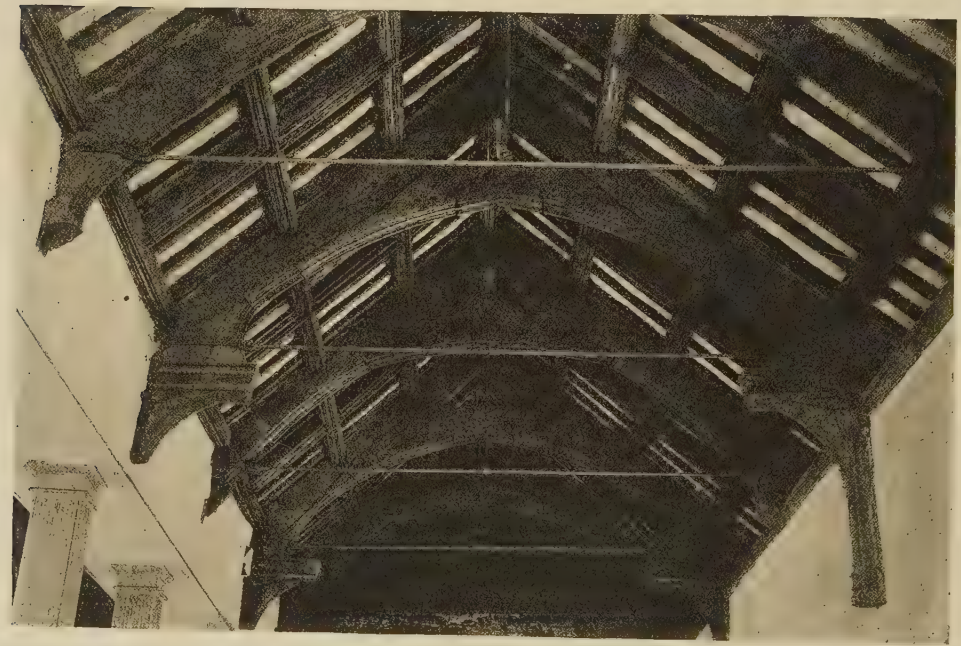
FRAMLINGHAM, SUFFOLK
HAMMER-BEAM ROOF WITH VAULTED CORNICE



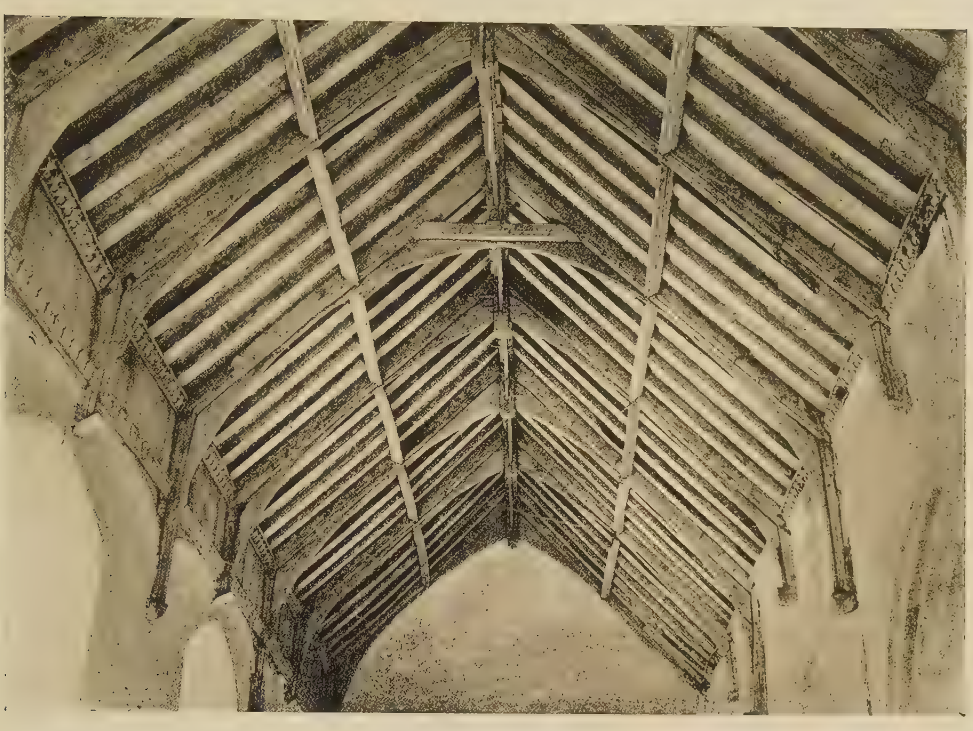
MIDDLETON, NORFOLK
ARCH-BRACED ROOF WITH COVED CORNICE



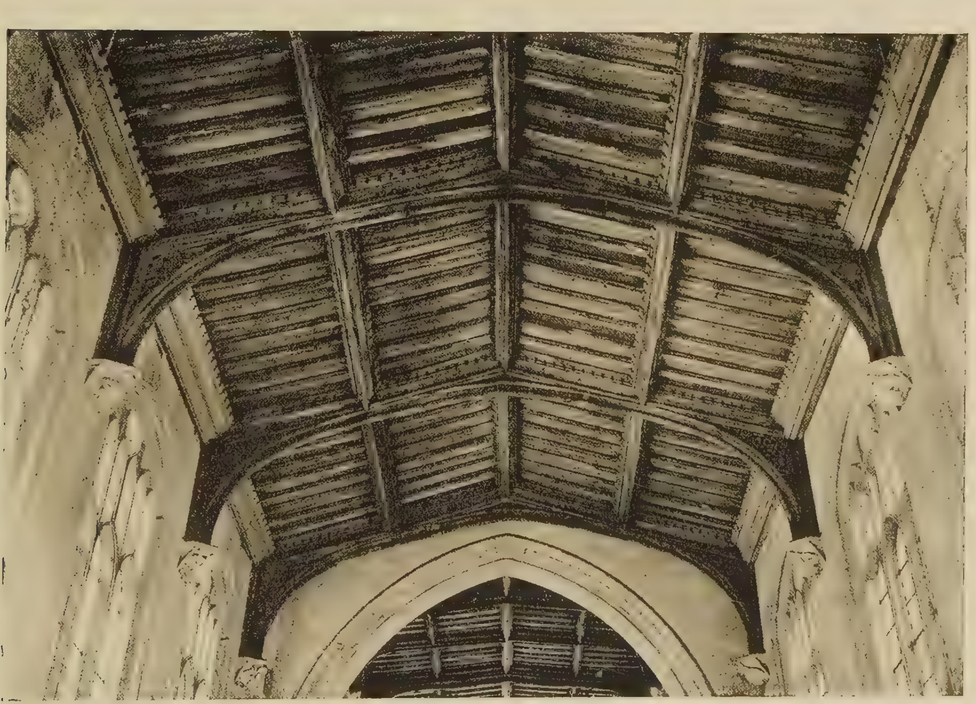
WHITCHURCH, DENBIGH



LLANYNYS, DENBIGH

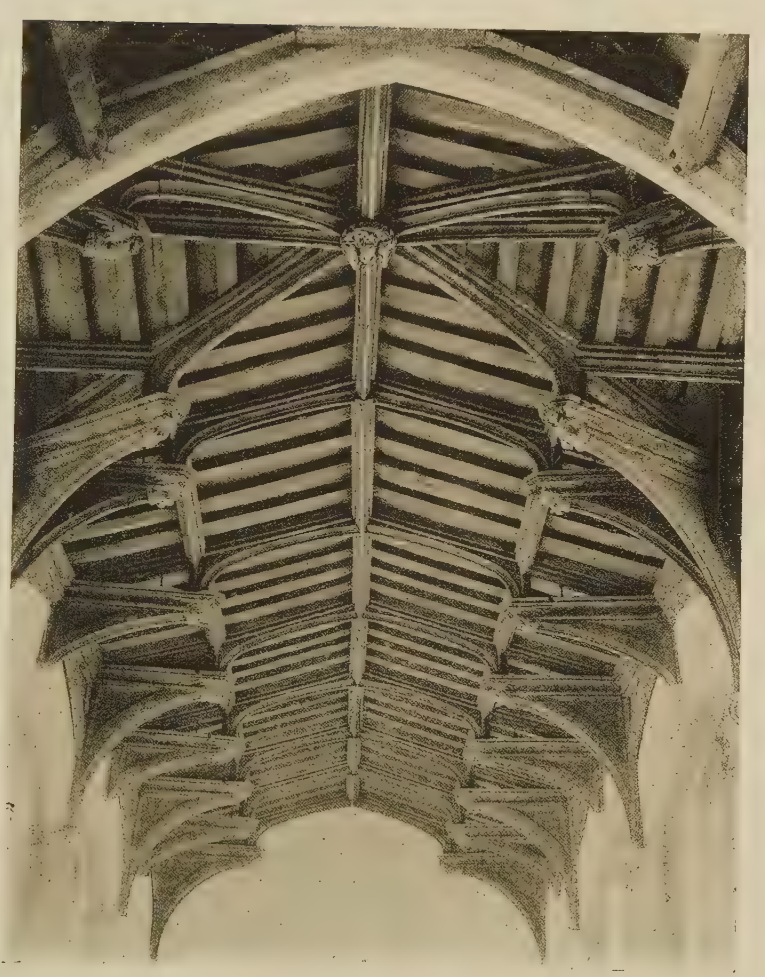


WESTHALL, SUFFOLK, SOUTH AISLE

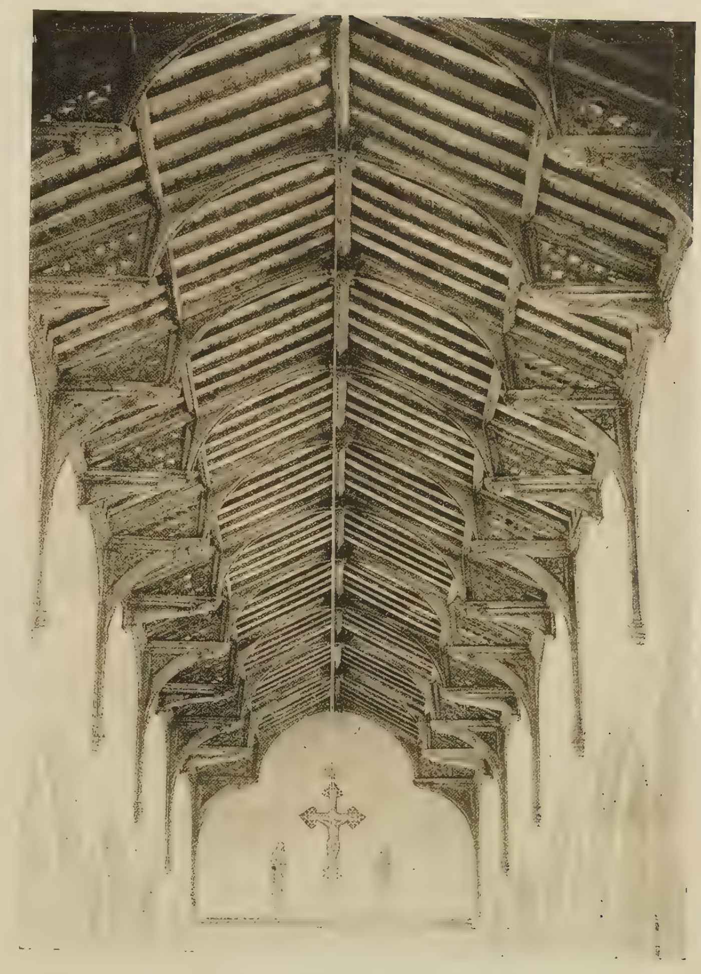


TATTERSHALL, LINCS., CHANCEL

THE HAMMER-BEAM ROOF—NORFOLK TYPE

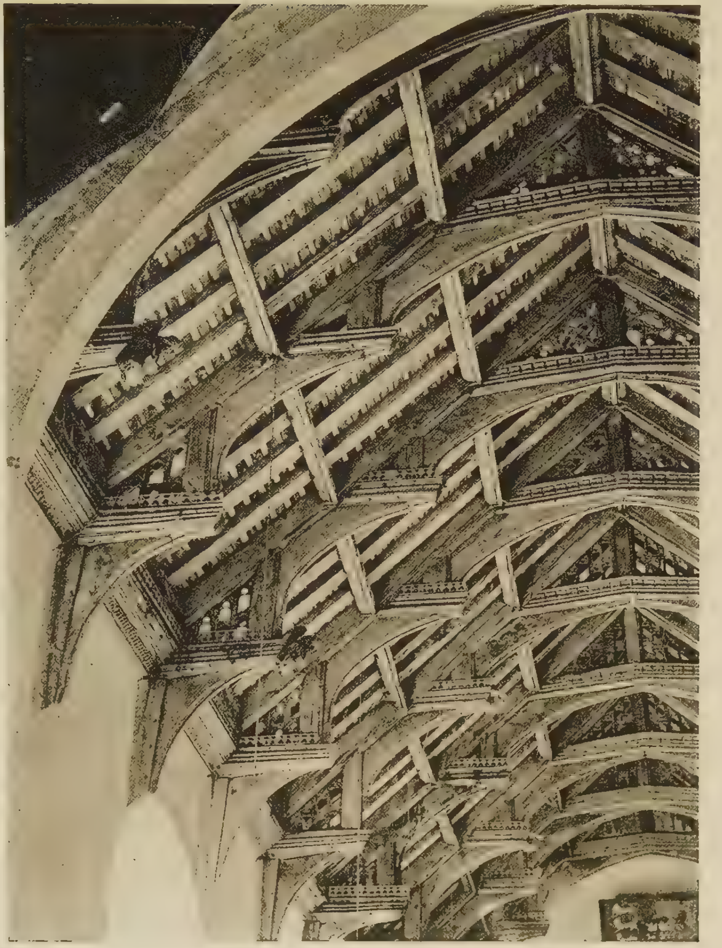


NORWICH ST PETER HUNGATE, NORFOLK

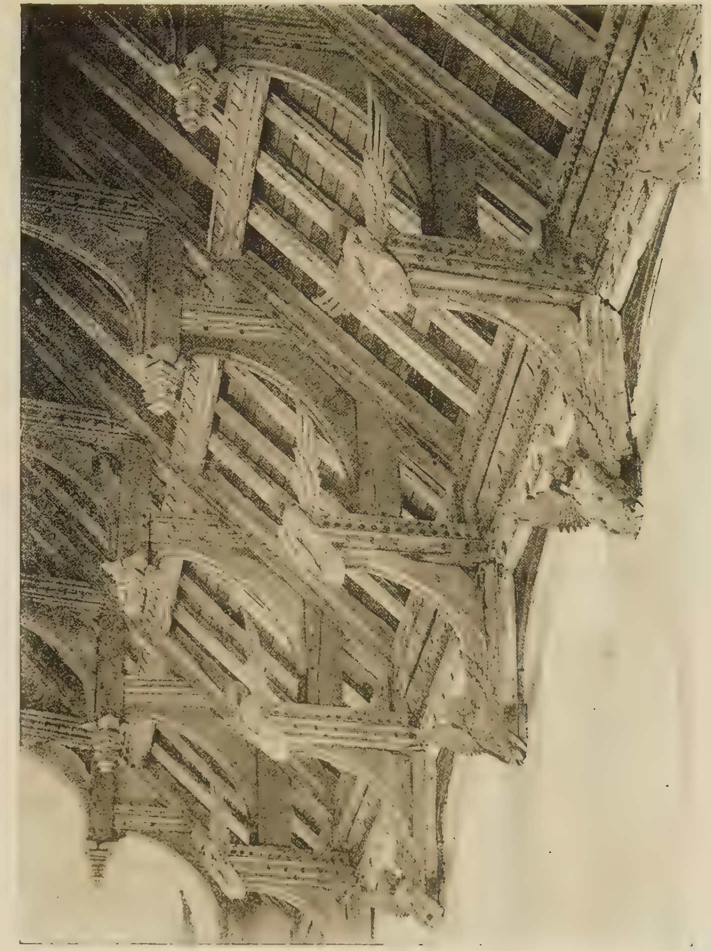


BLAKENEY, NORFOLK

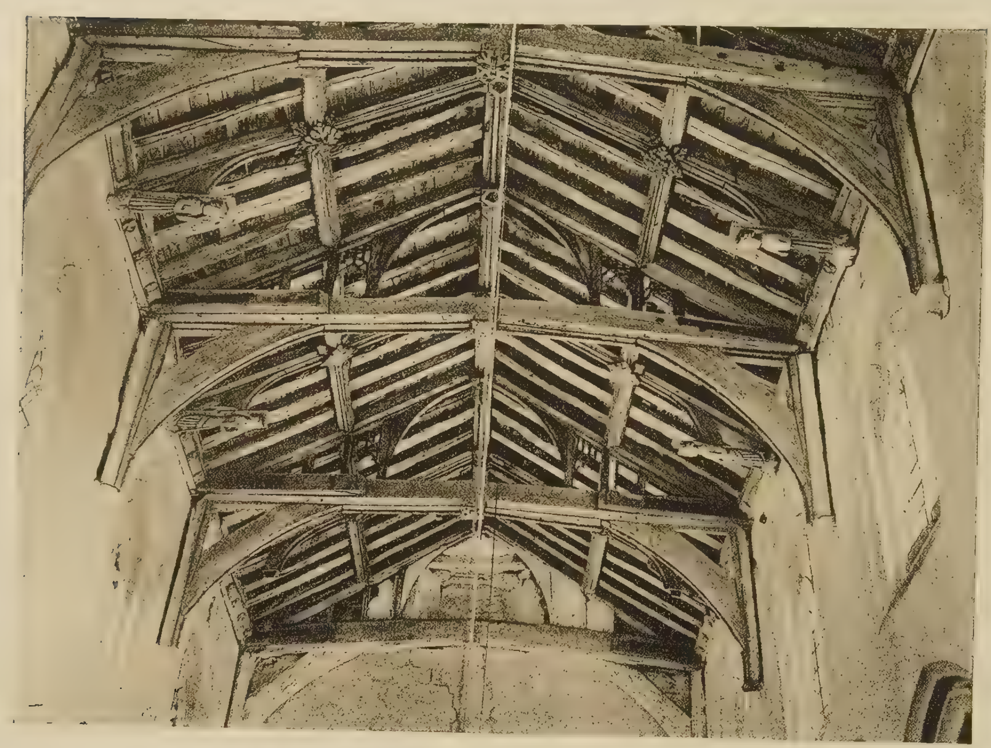
THE TRUE DOUBLE HAMMER-BEAM ROOF



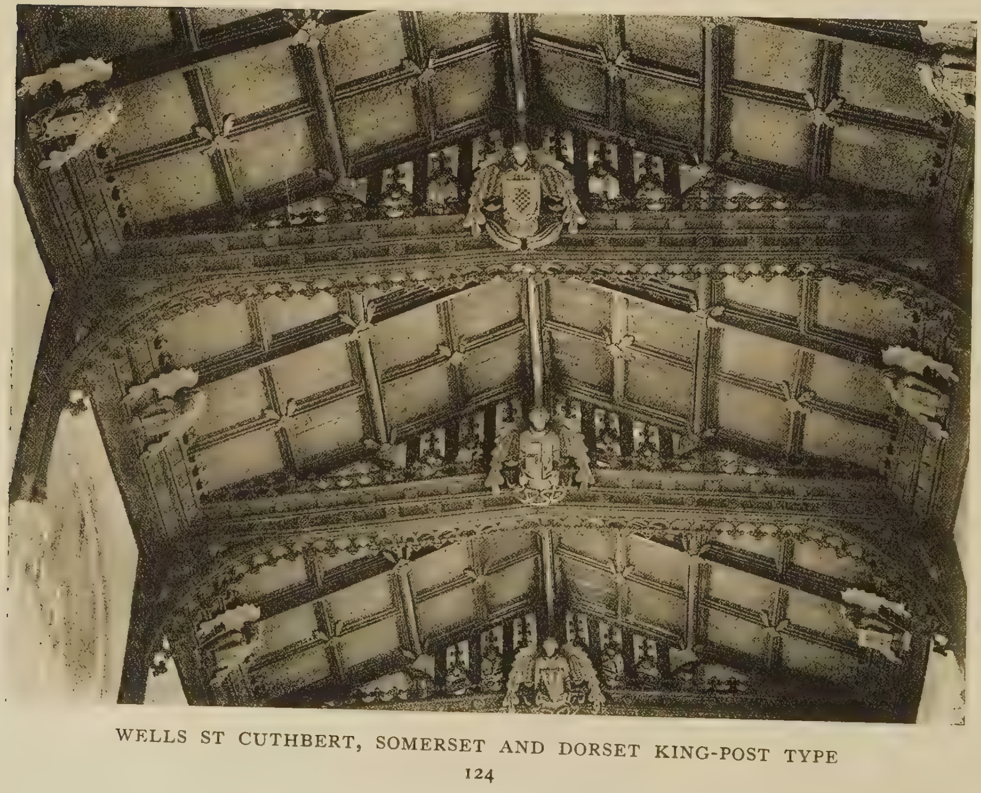
WORLINGWORTH, SUFFOLK, NORMAL TYPE



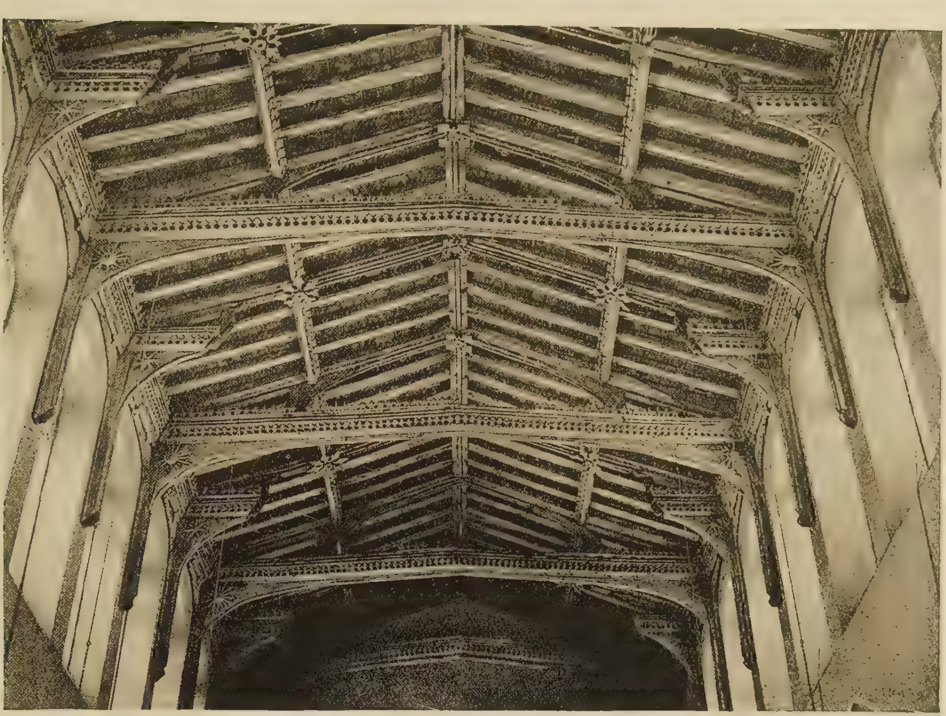
GRUNDISBURGH, SUFFOLK, WITH PENDANTS



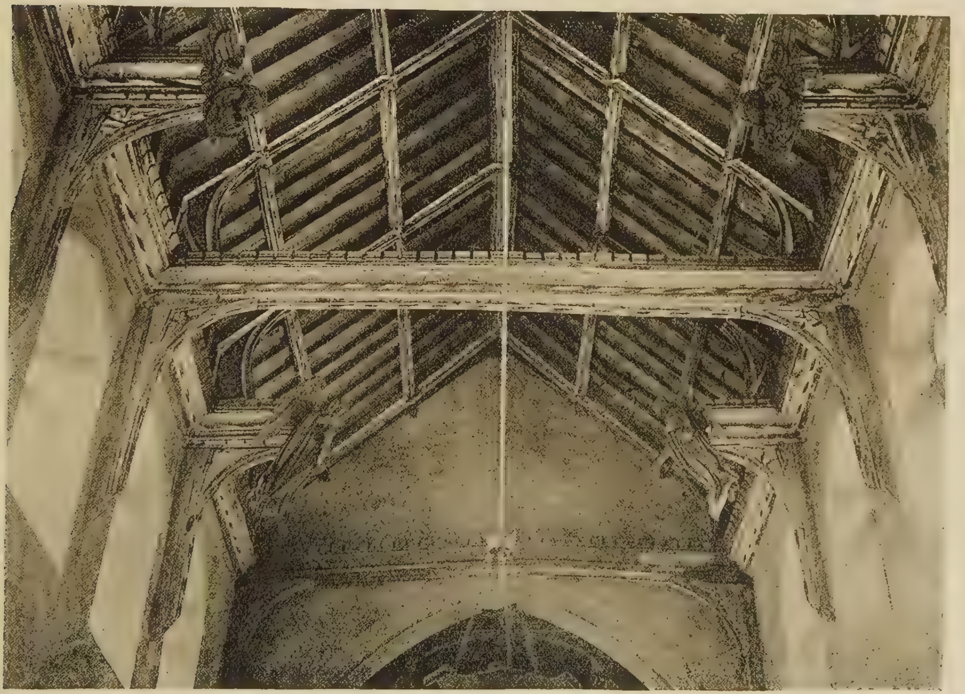
ADDLETHORPE, LINCS., MARSHLAND QUEEN-POST TYPE



WELLS ST CUTHBERT, SOMERSET AND DORSET KING-POST TYPE

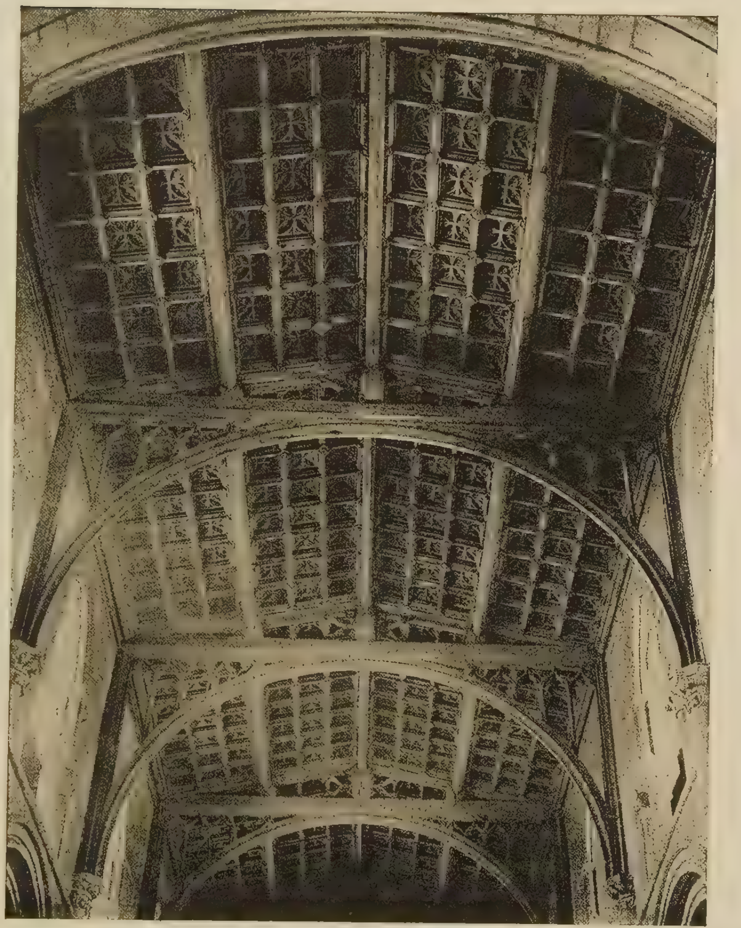


WALSHAM-LE-WILLOWS, SUFFOLK, INTERMEDIATE HAMMER-BEAM PRINCIPALS

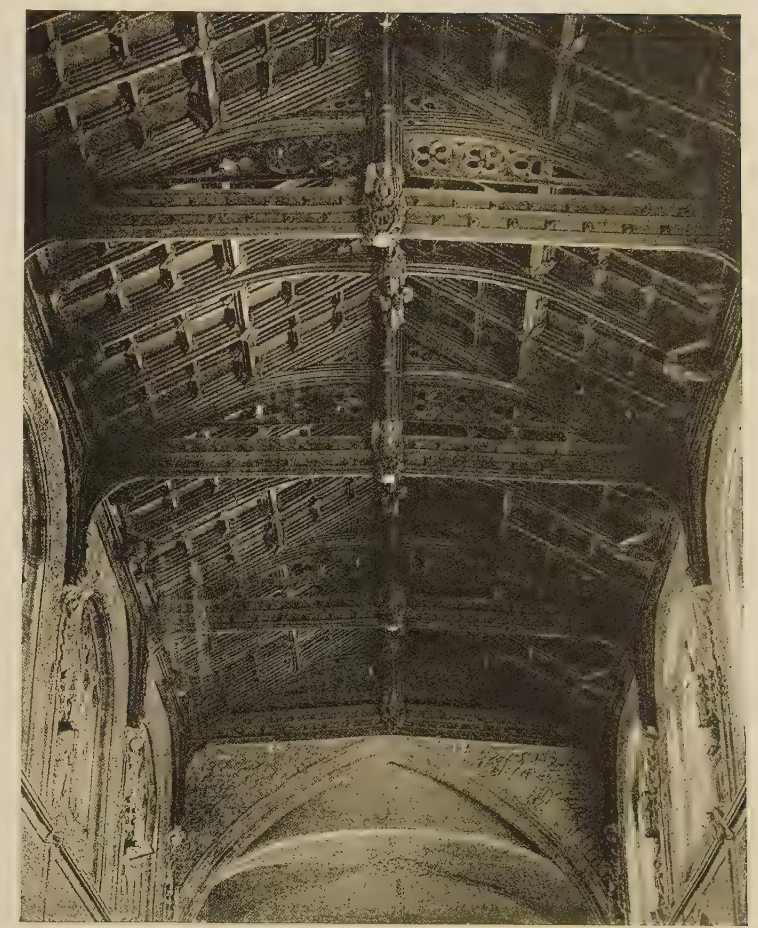


UFFORD, SUFFOLK, INTERMEDIATE HAMMER-BEAM PRINCIPALS

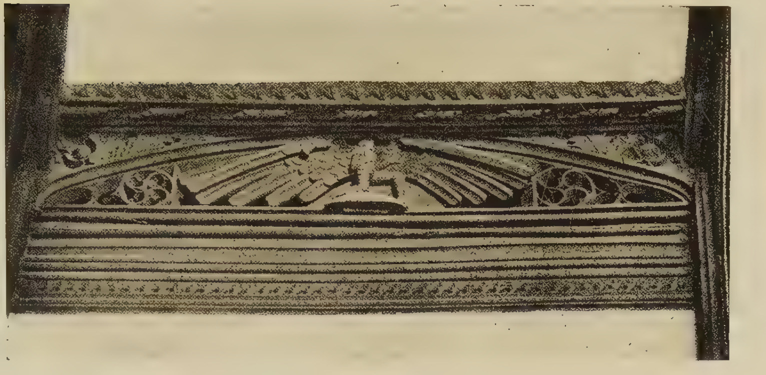
THE TIE-BEAM ROOF—FLAT AND HIGH PITCHED



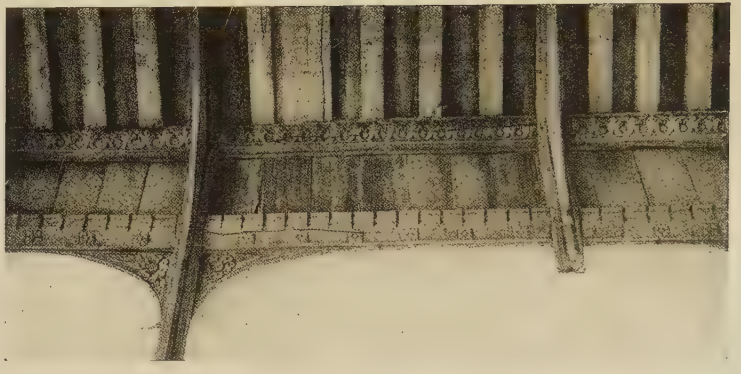
OXFORD CATHEDRAL, NAVE



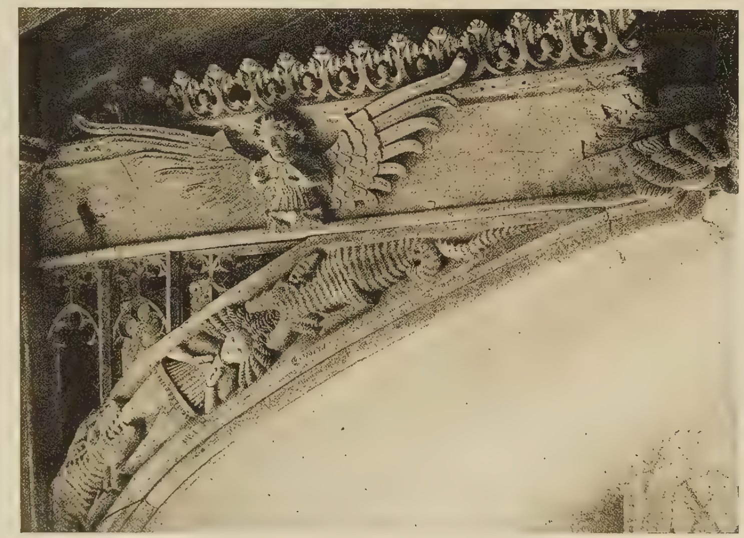
BRUTON, SOMERSET, NAVE



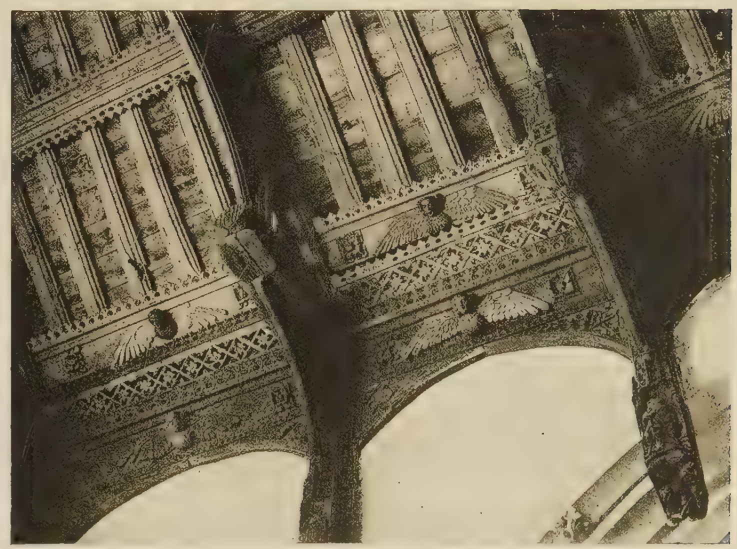
HELMINGHAM, SUFFOLK, CORNICE



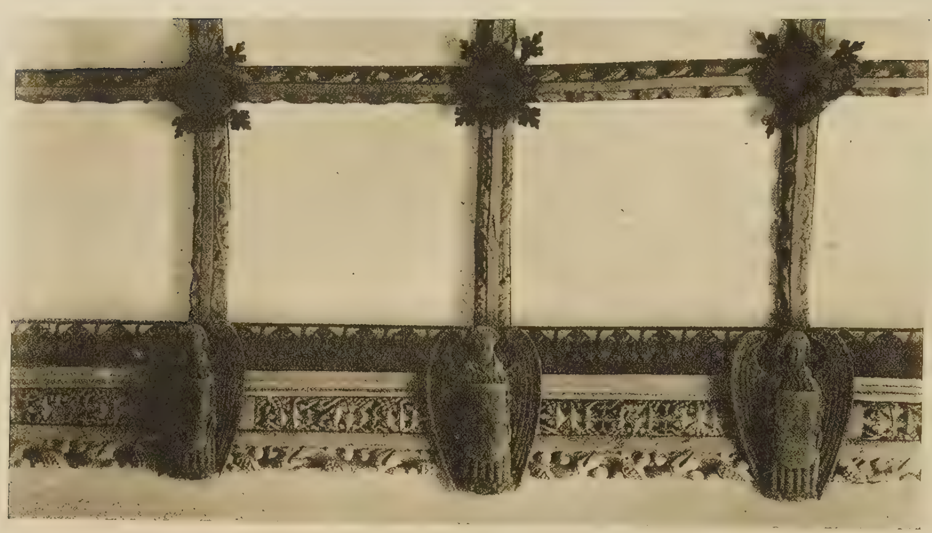
WESTHALL, SUFFOLK, CORNICE



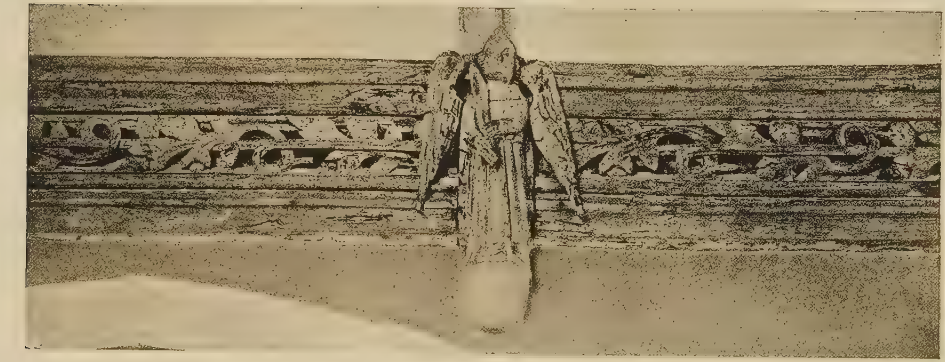
UPWELL, NORFOLK, HAMMER-BEAM



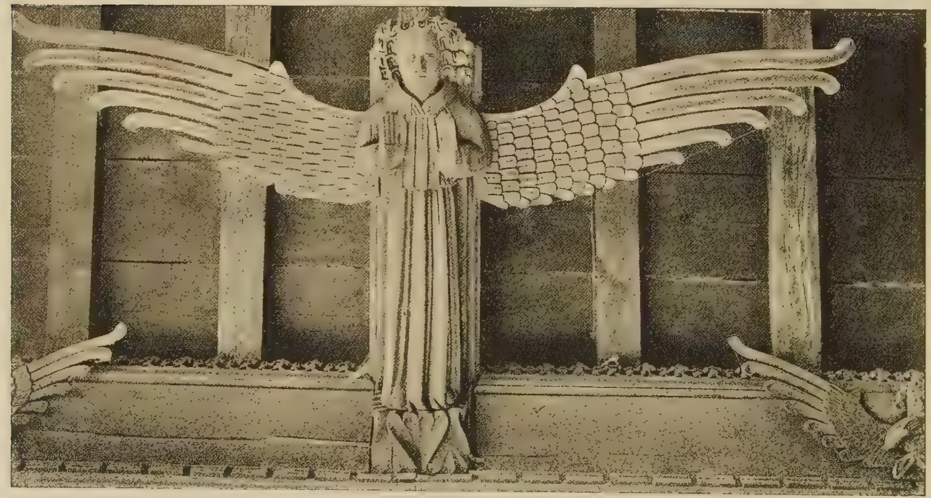
EARL STONHAM, SUFFOLK, CORNICE



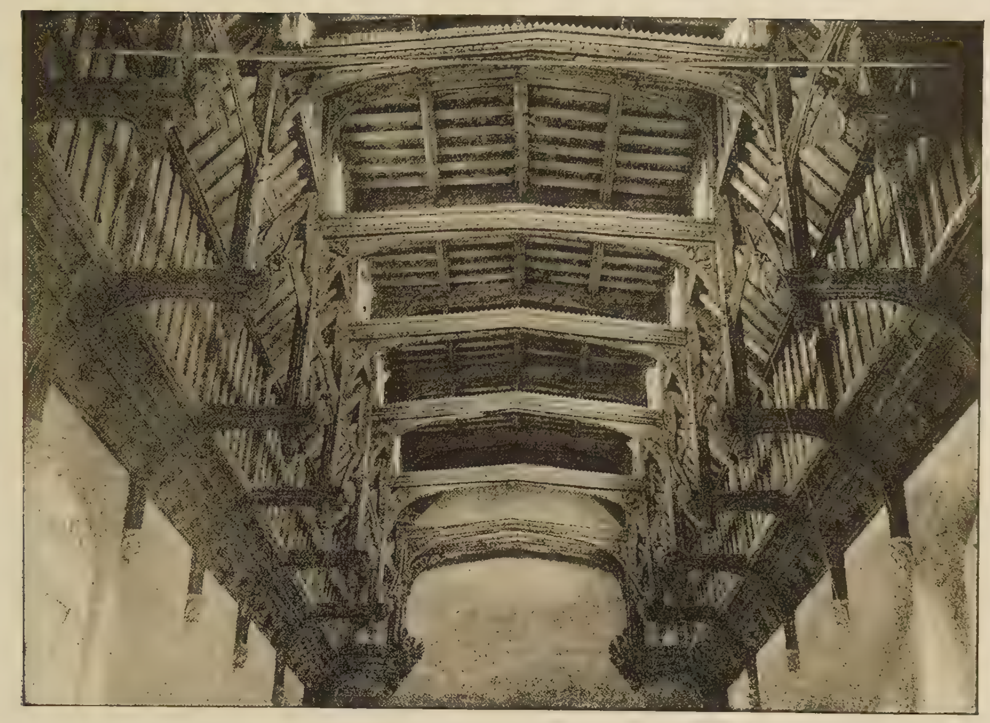
SELWORTHY, SOMERSET, WEST COUNTRY TYPE



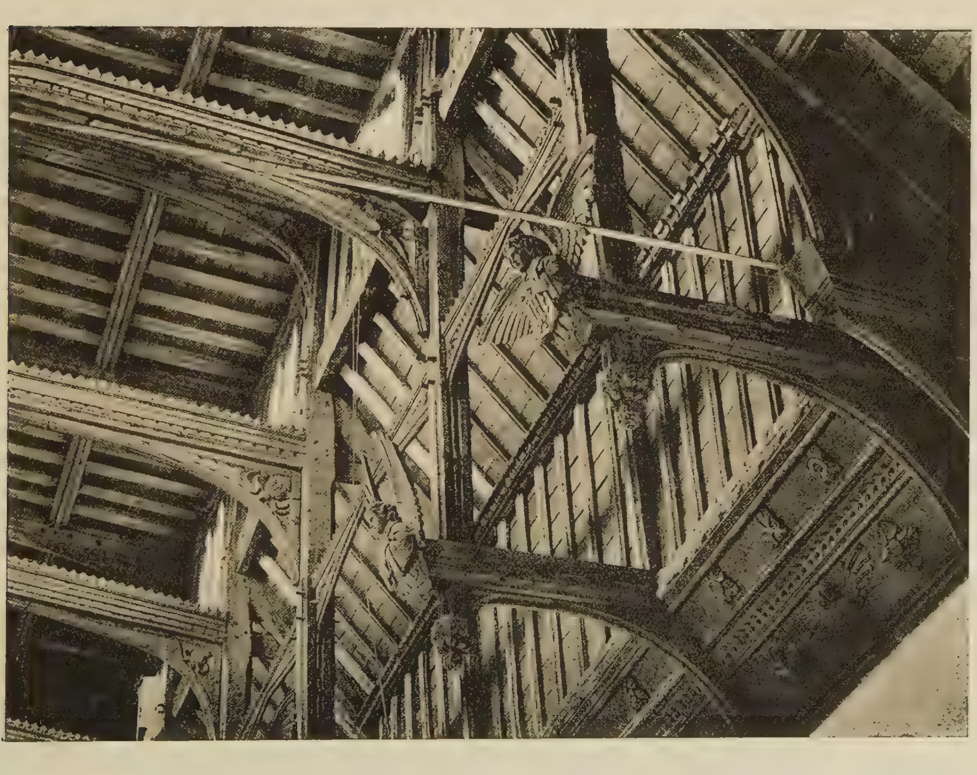
ST DECUMAN'S, SOMERSET, WEST COUNTRY TYPE



UPWELL, NORFOLK, EAST ANGLIAN TYPE

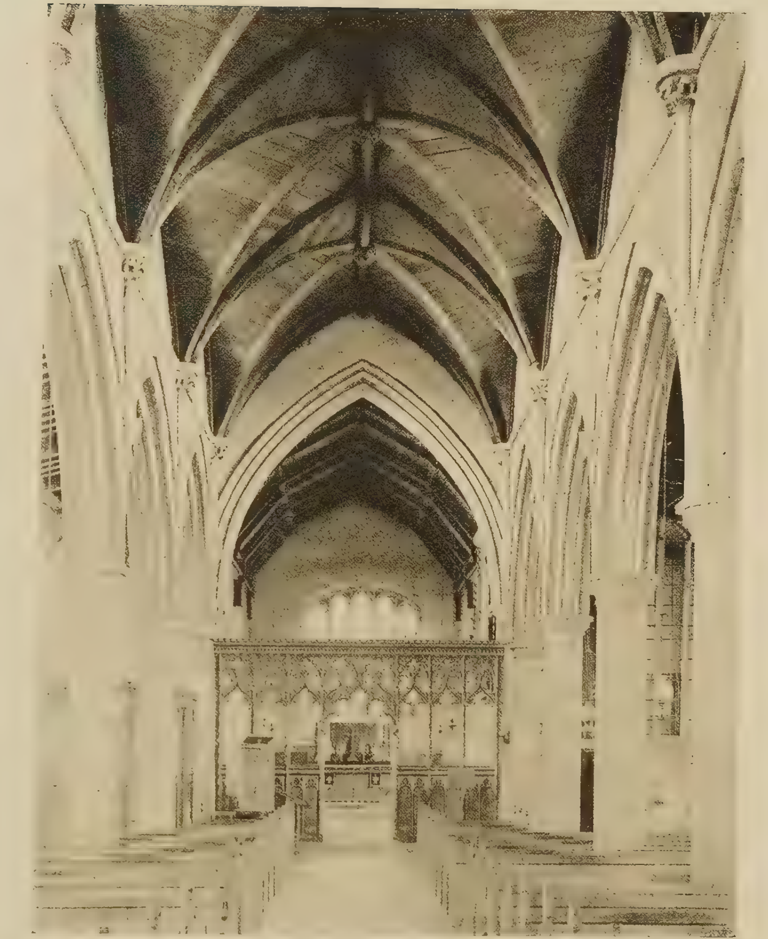


NEEDHAM MARKET, SUFFOLK, ROOF OF NAVE

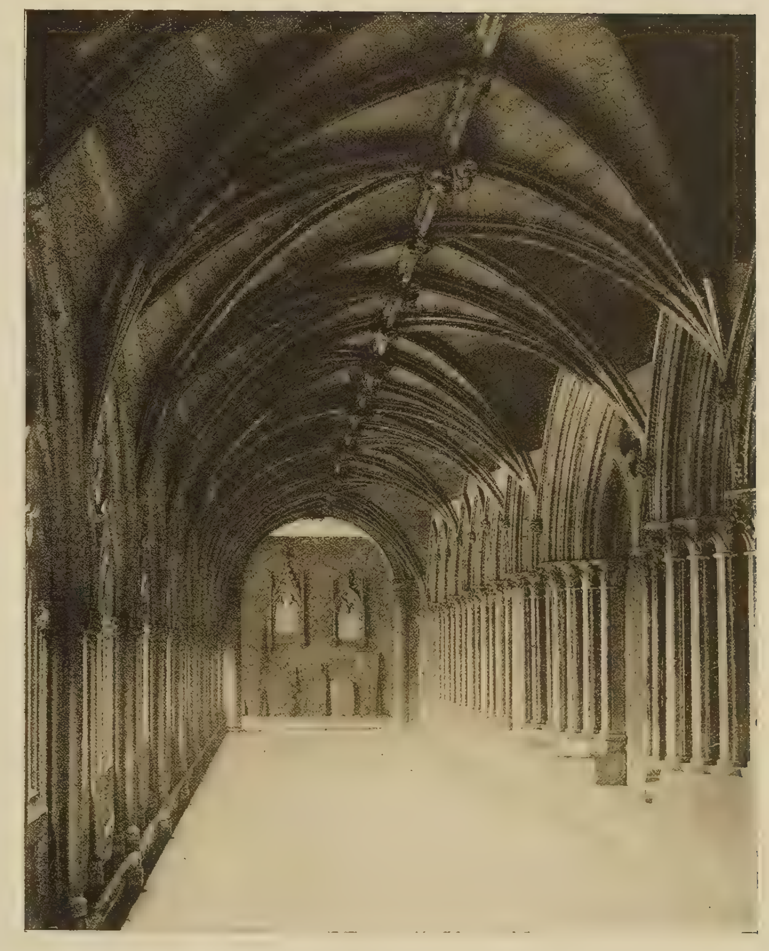


NEEDHAM MARKET, SUFFOLK, DETAIL OF ROOF

THE WOODEN VAULT—EARLY TYPES



WARMINGTON, NORTHANTS, THIRTEENTH CENTURY



LINCOLN CATHEDRAL CLOISTERS, *c.* 1296

TIMBER VAULTS

VAULTED ceilings of wood were not often employed in the Middle Ages, and several important examples have been destroyed, notably that of York minster. They have been much abused by critics of the school of Ruskin for insincerity of construction, but it must be confessed that there is little ground for such criticism. The copying in a certain material of the architectural forms which arose out of the nature of some other material is not necessarily wrong. If it were, then the whole of mediæval woodwork must be condemned, for there is scarcely a single feature of design which did not originally make its appearance in stone.

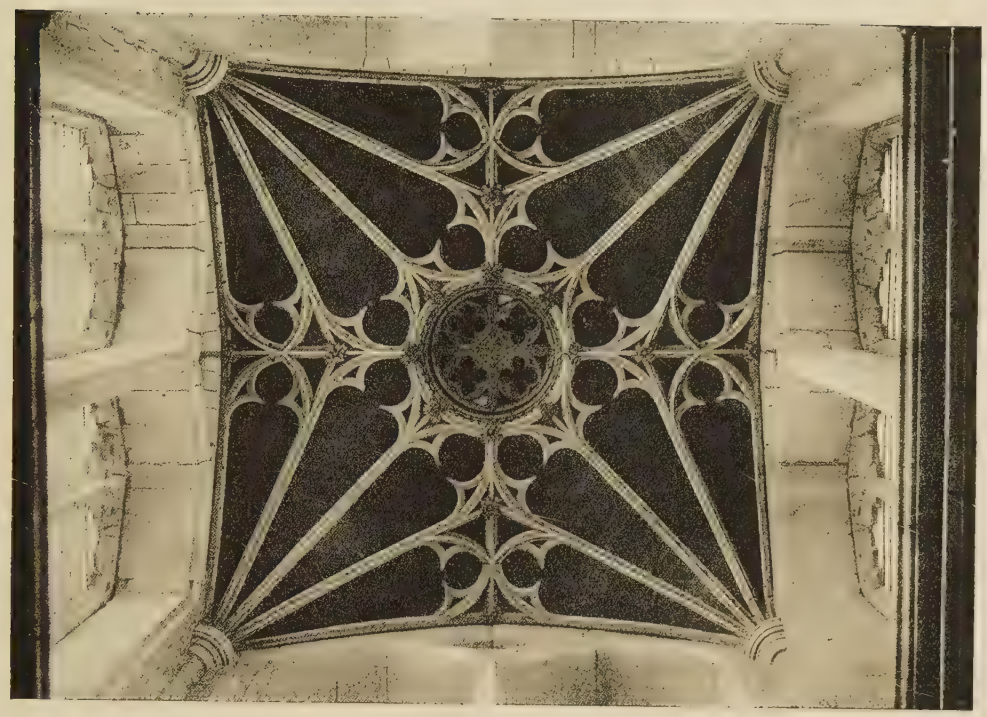
The only qualities in which the wood vault is inferior to that of stone are that it is not fire-proof, and it is not so durable. In one particular it has marked superiority: it exercises but little thrust, and can therefore be placed with confidence on old or weak walls. Of course it is true that the vault was originally evolved to suit the nature of stone, but its forms are easily and reasonably translated into timber. It is, as a matter of fact, much easier to construct a vault in wood than in stone, and though the cost is much less, the effect, to the unprejudiced observer, has good qualities of its own. But it is necessary to remember that the design must be light and airy, and that no attempt should be made to emulate the solemnity of the stone vault. This was appreciated by the later mediæval designers, who made their arched ribs slender in proportion and delicately moulded them, while they gaily decorated the panels with gold and colours, after the manner of woodwork.

One of the most ancient of wooden vaults is that over the nave of the parish church at Warmington, Northants (130), which appears to date from the middle of the thirteenth century. Its great chamfered ribs are heavy and clumsy in section and curve, and the whole design is of antiquarian, rather than artistic merit. An example, rather later in date, is the beautiful little vault of the cloisters of Lincoln (130), where the ribs of obtuse outline are beautifully moulded, while the carved bosses which cover their intersections are among the most exquisite works of their early date.

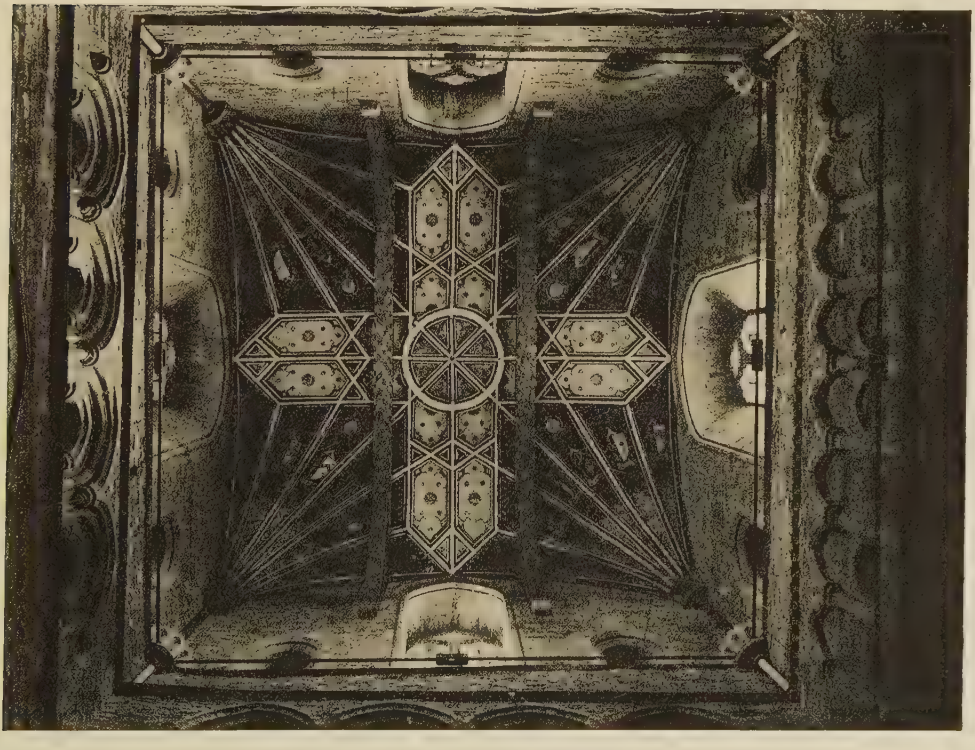
The fourteenth century is represented by the vault of the quire of St Albans abbey. It is of particularly beautiful outline, the curves of the ribs are carefully set out, and the mouldings, though excessively undercut, well express the material of which it is constructed. It is provided with intermediate ribs, and retains elaborate colour decoration of the fifteenth century, the chief motive of which is the circular medallion in each panel, bearing an Agnus Dei and an eagle alternately, framed in a border, which bursts into foliage, practically covering the triangular panel.

The fifteenth-century vault of the quire of Winchester is of true late Gothic type, with lierne ribs. It is of intricate design, and is a translation into wood of the stone vault of the nave, with the details modified to suit its timber construction. Another splendid wooden vault of the same period is that beneath the tower of St David's (133), of the lierne type, with a central aperture for the passage of the bells. It is decorated with modern colour, and is not improved by the beams which have been inserted in recent times to support it. Wooden vaults are far from common in lesser churches, but they sometimes occur, for instance beneath the central tower of Ludlow (133). The design of this example is much influenced by contemporary fan vaults.

But the most magnificent of all mediæval wooden vaults, daring in conception and sublime in effect, is the celebrated fourteenth-century central octagon at Ely. This is a real triumph of mediæval carpentry, almost baffling description. Bold as is its conception, it is essentially a timber construction. It has, of course, suffered severely from restoration, and its modern colour decoration is a catastrophe, but it remains one of the most impressive things in mediæval art.

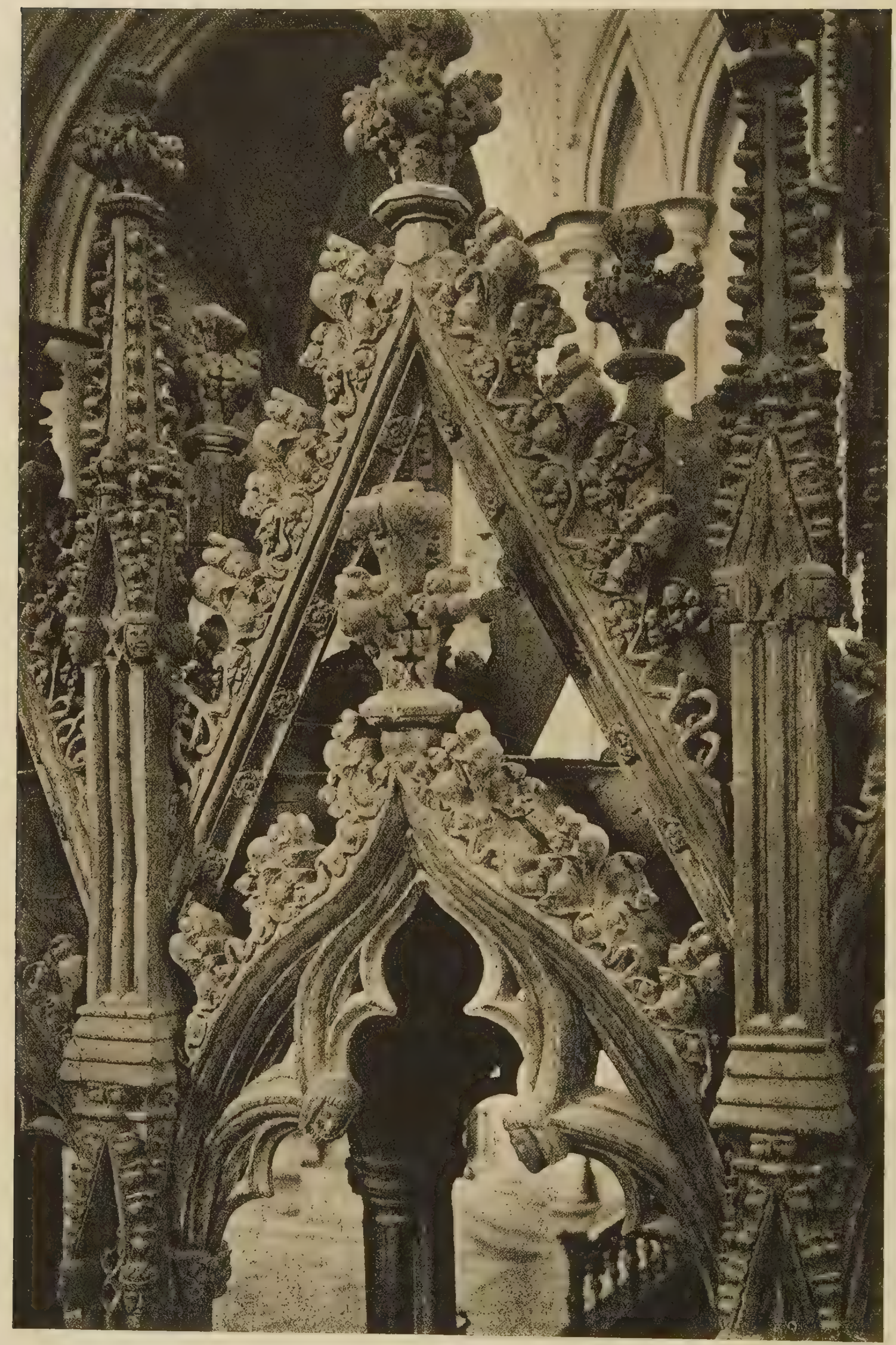


LUDLOW, SALOP, VAULT OF TOWER



ST DAVID'S CATHEDRAL, VAULT OF TOWER

DETAIL OF THE FOURTEENTH-CENTURY SEDILIA



BEVERLEY MINSTER, YORKS.

III

FITTINGS OF THE SANCTUARY

In mediæval days it was the custom to make most of the fittings of the sanctuary of stone, but a few examples of wooden altars, reredoses, and sedilia remain scattered in various English churches.

THE ALTAR

There is no doubt that the earliest altars were of wood, but at a very early date stone was introduced, as being more worthy and permanent. Thus it is stated on doubtful authority that wood altars were forbidden by Pope Evaristus in the second, and by Pope Sylvester in the fourth century. However this may be, it is certain that St Athanasius and St Augustine refer in their writings to altars of wood, and that mediæval Church Councils and bishops ordered again and again that no altar of wood should be consecrated, while many prohibited their use altogether. Nevertheless, wood altars continued to be erected occasionally right through the Middle Ages. A wooden altar at Aldwark is mentioned in a will of 1432, another existed at St Christopher-le-Stocks, London, in 1483, and another in Canterbury cathedral is mentioned by Erasmus.

The only existing wooden altar appears to be that at Tawstock, Devon, which may be post-Reformation, but is of early sixteenth-century date. The sides and front are of linen panelling. The altar table at North Walsham, Norfolk, is also assigned to a date just before the Reformation by some authorities, and is of more or less Gothic design.

It may be gathered from numerous mediæval illuminations that the foot-pace or platform in front of the altar was very often of wood, but none has survived.

THE REREDOS

The great majority of English altars were arranged with an altar piece or reredos of about the same dimensions as the front of the altar itself, and curtains called riddels, hung on brackets, parallel to the ends of the altar, projected from the wall on either side. The altar piece was usually a curtain of tapestry or embroidery, called a dorsal, such as that which is still preserved at Chipping Campden, Gloucester, but a reredos of wood, stone, or alabaster was sometimes used when the parish could afford to do so. The wooden reredoses were generally oblong, surrounded with a frame. The panel was painted or carved in relief. Sometimes it served as a background to a series of images, standing on the sill. In many cases it was divided by pinnacled uprights into a number of little niches, each with its own canopy and base, enshrining figures of the saints. The central niche often broke up above the general level of the top of the frame. A rood with figures of Our Lady and St John, or other images, such as St Gabriel and Our Lady, forming an Annunciation, was sometimes poised on the top of the frame.

Remains of reredoses are very rare indeed, and most of our knowledge is derived from mediæval illuminations, inventories, and other documents.

One of the earliest and most important is the wonderful reredos, believed to be that of the high altar of the abbey church, now in the Jerusalem Chamber at Westminster. It is a splendid work of the thirteenth century, richly decorated with gesso and the most beautiful paintings imaginable. There is another thirteenth-century reredos of less importance in the church at Adisham, Kent, said to have been brought from Canterbury. It is a rectangular frame, composed of two large columns with top, bottom, and middle rails, forming two rectangular panels. The lower panel was probably hidden behind the altar, but is decorated with four quatrefoiled circles, while the upper, the reredos proper, had an arcade with saints painted in the panels, on a diapered background. There are mortices and grooves in the front of each column, showing that in this case the riddels were of similar wood panelling, instead of curtains. This arrangement may be compared with that of the fifteenth-century reredoses against the screen at Ranworth.

There seem to be no remains of wooden reredoses of the fourteenth century, though there are a number of examples in stone.

At Norwich, in the cathedral, there is preserved a very fine painted wooden reredos of the early fifteenth century, with scenes from the Passion, within a richly decorated frame of gilt gessowork. It is very simply constructed of horizontal boards, pegged to the frame, and is imperfect at the top, having been mutilated to form the top of a table. It appears that the central panel was slightly higher than the others, as in so many other cases. Perhaps the only fragment of a wooden reredos remaining *in situ* is that of the north chapel at Worstead, Norfolk. It consists of a delicately moulded frame, painted and decorated with flowerwork, with a plinth consisting of very delightfully traceried squares.

A good many reredoses of wood with alabaster figure work are still to be found on the Continent, and it has been proved beyond doubt that a number of these are of English work. In the earlier examples the woodwork is subordinate to the alabaster. The frame is chamfered and decorated with square patches of gilded gesso, and the carving is confined to the cresting, which usually occurs on either side of the tall central panel. Most of these reredoses are made to fold up after the manner of a triptych, probably for convenience of export. Some were provided with wooden shutters to close in Lent. As time went on there was a tendency to do more and more of the work in oak instead of alabaster. Traceried bases were introduced, and finally the canopies over the alabaster groups were made of wood.

PIX CANOPIES

Before the Reformation the Blessed Sacrament was reserved in a silver box or pix, veiled in a cloth of cypress, and was hung beneath a canopy of embroidery or metalwork over the high altar. But it appears from documentary evidence that the pix canopy was sometimes a wooden spirelet, like a little font-cover, coloured and gilt. Three objects, about which there has been endless controversy, have been regarded as pix canopies of this type. That at Wells is a cylindrical drum of pierced tracery of thirteenth-century design, divided into two light windows by turned shafts with caps and bases. There are moulded rings at the top and the bottom, the former with a coarse cresting of foliage. It is possible, if not probable, that this interesting example of early decorative woodwork was intended for a pix canopy, but the little spire which stands on a corbel in the quire of Tewkesbury abbey, though often described as a pix, appears more likely to be a miniature steeple for a sanctus bell. The similar spire at Milton Abbas, however, is almost certainly a pix canopy. It is very delicate and charming work of the fifteenth century.

TESTERS

That part of the roof above the high altar was frequently more richly decorated than the other bays. The rafters were often boarded over and painted, and were generally divided into panels by applied mouldings, as at East Hendred, Berks., and Minster Lovell, Oxon. An attractive treatment was to suspend a tester from the roof. Such testers are extremely rare, but two lovely fifteenth-century examples are still in existence.

At Ludlow, Salop, the tester is curved to fit around the arch of the window above the altar. A moulded curb with a carved trail and cresting decorates the edge, and there are carved angels holding shields at the angles. The underside is divided into panels with moulded ribs, having bosses at their intersections. At Clun (142), in the same county, there is a similar tester, but the design is not so striking.

Instead of being curved it is obtusely gabled. It seems probable that neither of these examples can be regarded as typical. The more usual form was probably flat, like those over the tombs of the Black Prince and Henry the Fourth at Canterbury (355).

SEDILIA

The seats for the celebrant and his assistants, known as sedilia, and placed on the south side of the altar, were almost always of stone, but there are a few interesting instances of the use of timber. These generally occur in churches completely aisled, with arcades continued right to the east wall, leaving no wall space into which sedilia of masonry could be recessed.

At Upchurch, Kent, there is a sedilia bench of masonry with a panelled back of timber, which may have had some form of canopy, since the top is mutilated. The panelling is divided by a moulded rail into two long horizontal divisions. The upper one has a fine band of continuous tracery of fourteenth-century style, while the lower is pierced with several trefoil-headed lancets, very unequally spaced.

The earliest sedilia of real importance are those of the abbey church at Westminster (144). They are four in number, without any division between the seats, though the canopy is planned with four vaulted bays, masked by gabled hanging arches, crocketed and foliated. The pendants terminate in beautifully carved human busts. The pinnacles between the gables have been destroyed. The panelling at the back of the seats exhibits some of the best figure painting of the date in England. Each of the four divisions has a magnificent saint, drawn with a fine simplicity, on a diapered background.

The fourteenth-century sedilia at Beverley minster (134, 144) are magnificent. There are four seats, canopied with a vaulted structure supported on ten pinnacled and traceried shafts, connected with lovely ogee arches with straight-sided gables above, richly crocketed after the manner of the Percy tomb which it faces. It is interesting to compare this fine work with that of the bishop's throne at Exeter, which it resembles in style, though the detail of the carving hardly reaches the high standard of that triumph of mediæval art.

Rodmersham, Kent (145), still preserves wooden sedilia of the fifteenth century, very successfully combined with the parclose screen between the chancel and south aisle. The seats are separated by shaped elbows, and the panelled back supports a handsome coving with a moulded cornice and deep carved cresting. It is a simple and dignified piece of work.

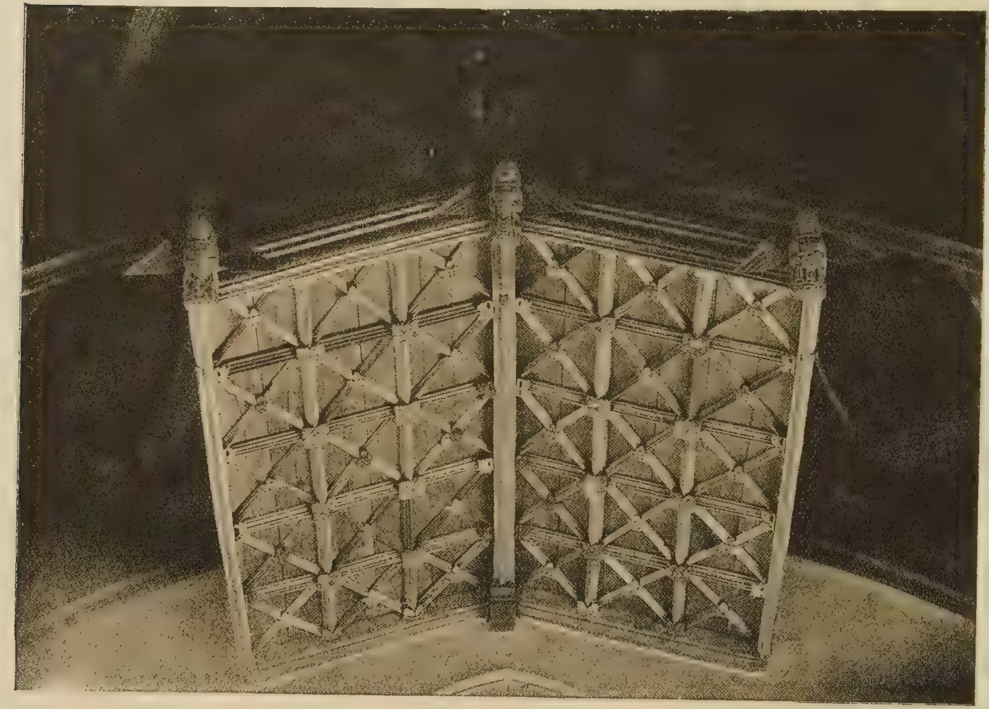
In the cathedral at St David's (145) there are charming sedilia of the fifteenth century, more elaborate in design. There are three seats, and the panelled back is pierced with rectilinear tracery. Beneath the coved canopy there is an elaborate vaulted niche head to each seat, with very delicate and beautiful crocketed ogee arches and pinnacles.

The sedilia at Hexham abbey church (141), four of which are ancient though much restored, are also of the fifteenth century. The seats are separated by shaped and pierced standards of elaborate design, and are canopied by intricate vaults, semi-octagonal on plan. These served as a base for elaborate spires of tabernacle work, now almost wholly renewed.

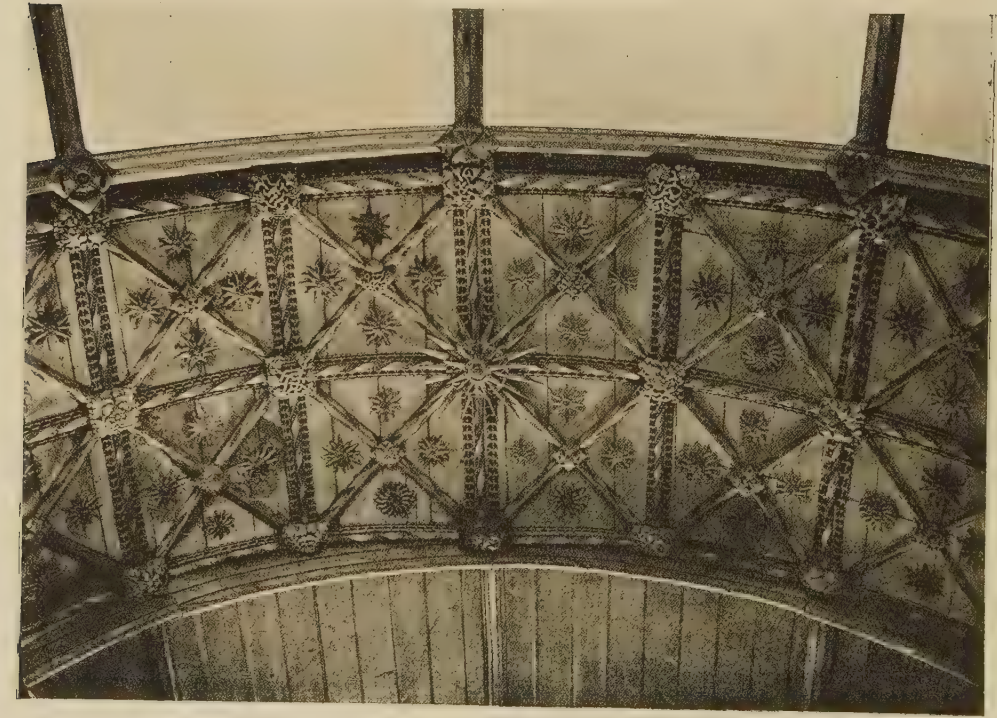
EASTER SEPULCHRE

The Easter sepulchre, of which so much has been written, appears to have been frequently constructed of wood. Naturally, the vast majority have been destroyed, but a few examples of mediæval woodwork still exist which may possibly be Easter sepulchres. Of these the most authentic is that at Cowthorpe, Yorks. (143). It consists of a wooden chest, decorated with traceried panels, with posts at the angles, carrying a gabled roof with a fine cresting running along the ridge and eaves, and crocketed gables. Arched braces spring from the posts to the eaves of the roof.

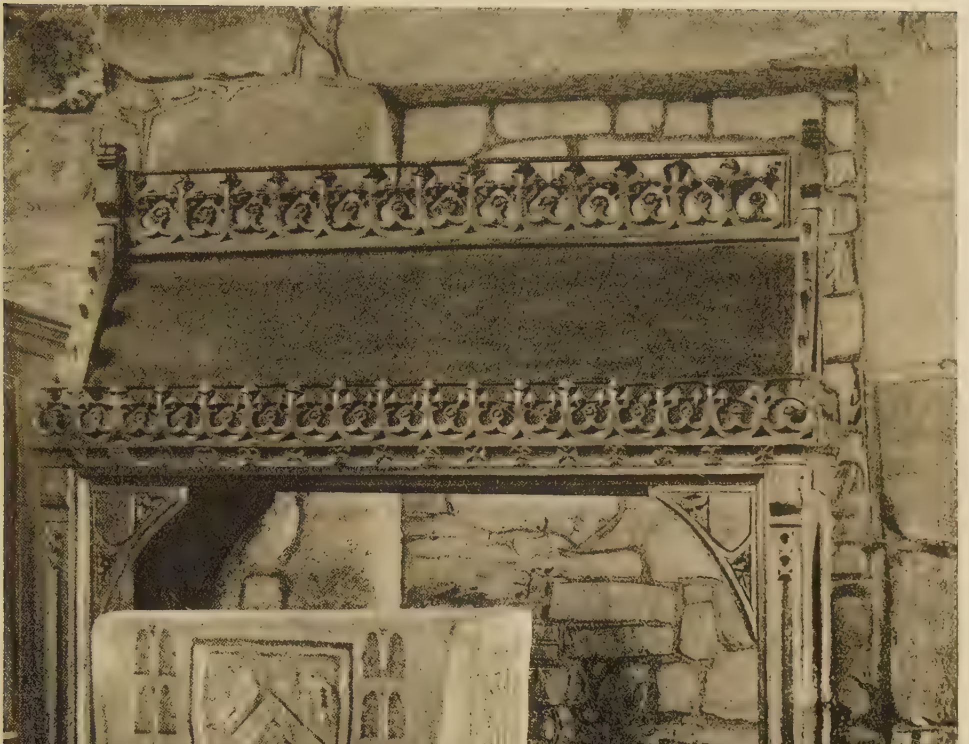
THE SEDILIA, HEXHAM ABBEY



CLUN, SALOP, ALTAR TESTER

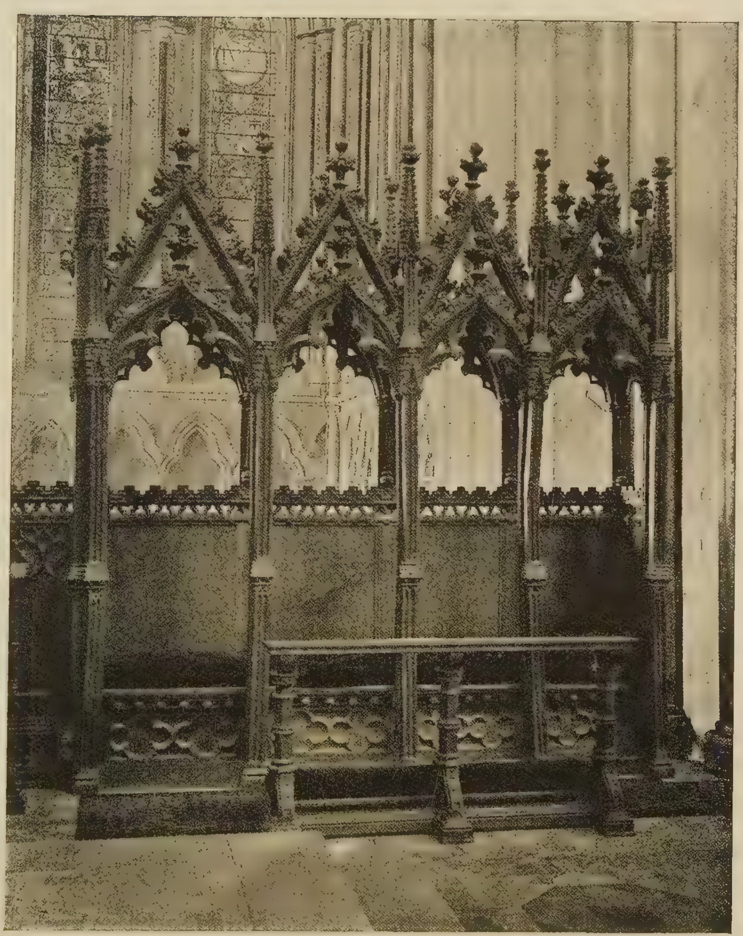


HENNOCK, DEVON, ROOD CELURE

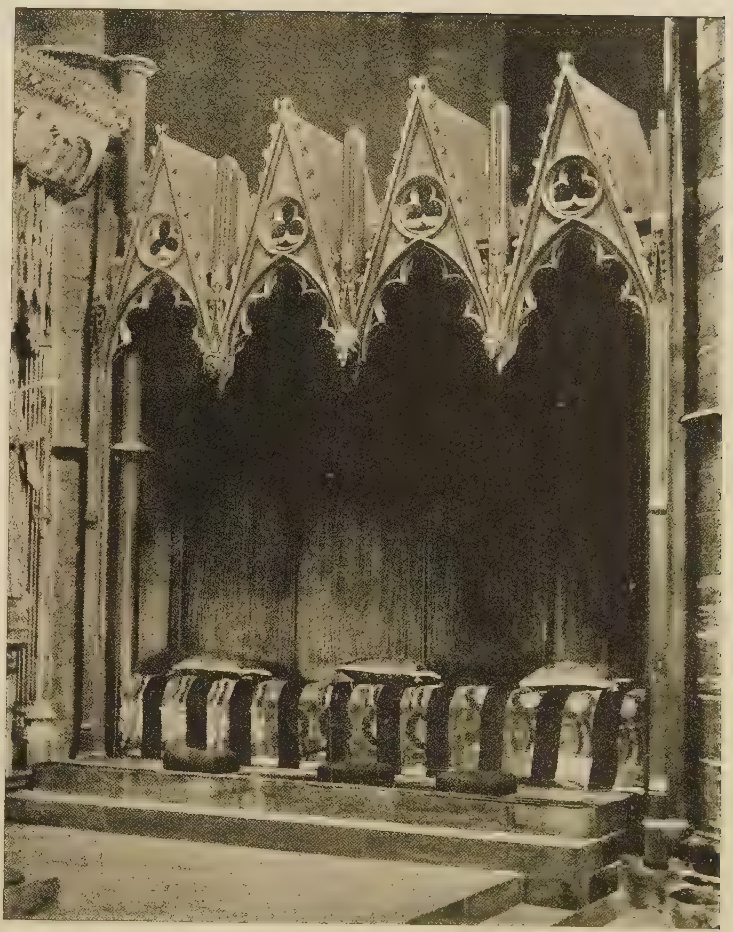


COWTHORPE, W.R., YORKS., THE EASTER SEPULCHRE

FOURTEENTH CENTURY SEDILIA OF WOOD

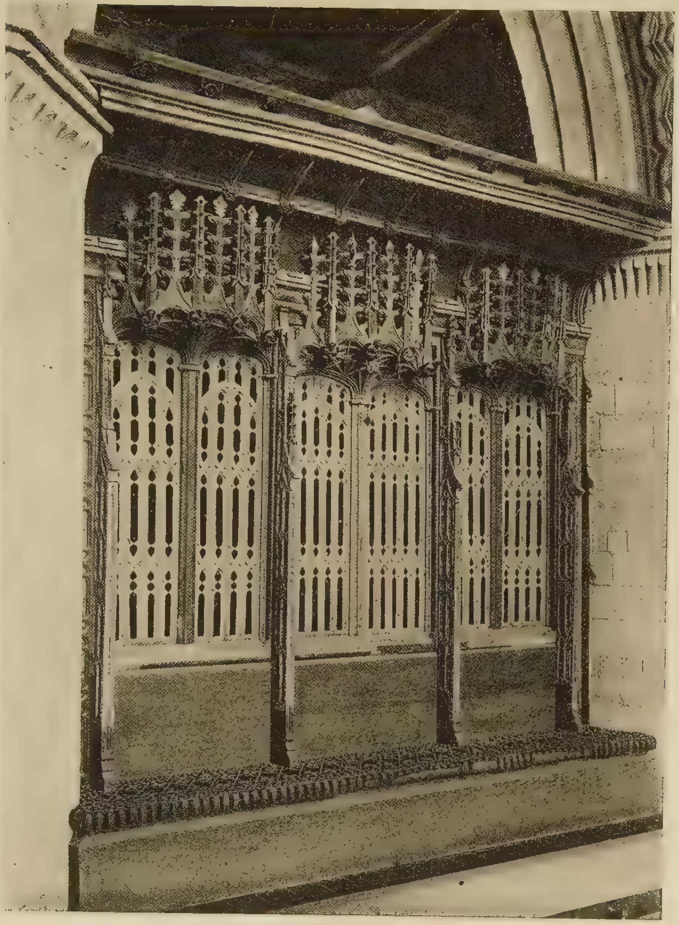


BEVERLEY MINSTER, YORKS., *c.* 1340

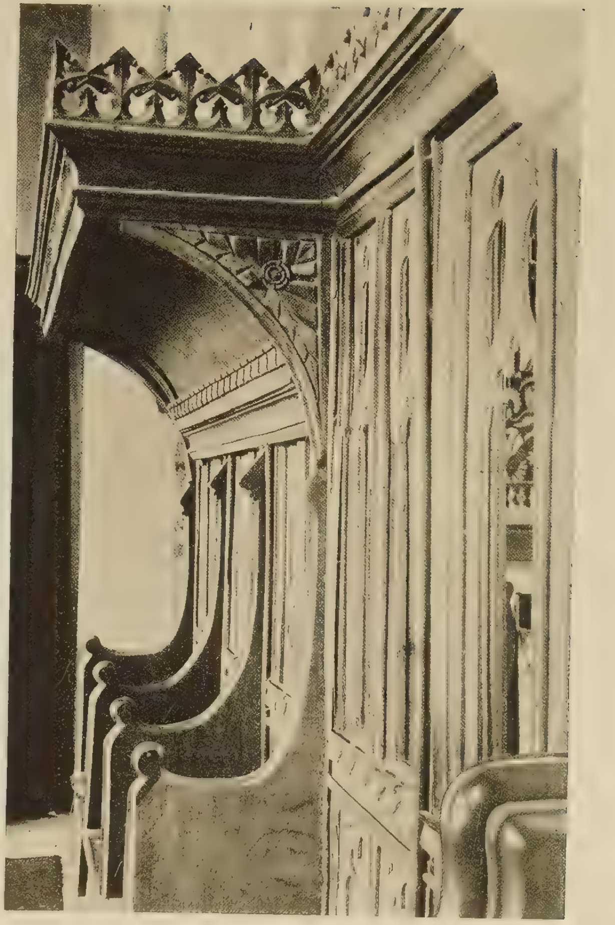


WESTMINSTER ABBEY CHURCH, *c.* 1300

FIFTEENTH-CENTURY SEDILIA OF WOOD

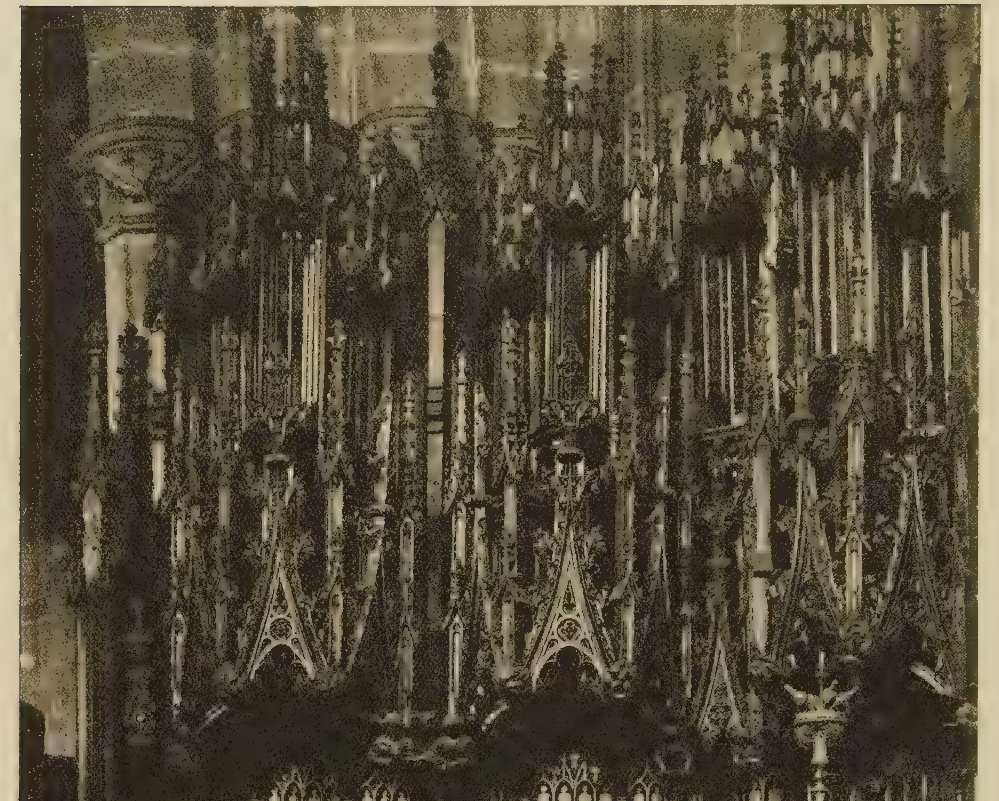


ST DAVID'S CATHEDRAL



RODMERSHAM, KENT

TABERNACLED STALLS WITH TRIPLE NICHES



NANTWICH, CHESHIRE

IV

QUIRE FITTINGS

STALLS

THE quires of most mediæval churches were fitted up with seemly ranges of stalls for those taking part in the services. The seats were arranged against the screen so that the occupants faced the altar, and were returned eastwards, backing against the side walls. The same general plan was adopted in churches of all ranks. Those of the cathedral and abbey churches were, in most cases, naturally the most beautiful and ornate, but returned stalls, vieing with those of the greater churches, occur in the collegiate church of Stratford-on-Avon, the parish church of Southwold (168), at Nantwich (146) (a chapel of ease to the parish church of Acton), in the chapel of the Archbishop's palace at Croydon, the Vicar's chapel at Wells, the almshouse chapel at Chichester, and in the college chapels of the Universities. They also occur in chantry chapels, as in the case of the Beauchamp chapel at Warwick, in Lady chapels, as at Winchester, and in mere parcloses at the ends of aisles, as at Winthorpe.

Yet it used to be maintained by the antiquaries that the presence of stalls in a parish church was a sure sign that the church was once collegiate or "in some way monastic." When diligent research has failed to establish any such connection, absurd traditions have been invented to the effect that the stalls have been brought from some destroyed abbey. Occasionally these surmises have been correct, as in the case of the stalls at Whalley and Richmond, but more often they are absolutely false, being based on the failure of the nineteenth-century antiquary to appreciate the grandeur of parochial services before the Reformation in even the minor parish churches.

Mediæval Consuetudinaries give minute directions as to the order of precedence to be observed in the assignment of quire stalls. That in use in the cathedrals was to be followed as closely as possible by the churches of lesser rank. At Salisbury the terminal seats ranked first. That on the south side of the quire entrance was allotted to the Dean, that on the north to the Precentor; of the eastern terminal seats, that on the south was assigned to the Chancellor, that on the north to the Treasurer. The fifth in order of precedence sat in the stall on the right of the Dean, the sixth on the left of the Precentor, and so on. The same principles were observed in the monastic churches, but in other places the eastern terminal seats were not of high rank, the third seat in order of precedence being the second stall on the south side of the quire entrance; otherwise the arrangement was the same. The greater cathedral and abbey churches had so many attached to the foundation that a second row of stalls was introduced on either side of the quire for novices or minor clergy. These are never found in parish churches. In mediæval days it was the custom for the singing-boys to stand or kneel in front of the stalls. No seats were provided for them, except in a very few instances, while desks for the boys are absolutely unknown. They have often been introduced in modern times, crowding the quire and making the seemly conduct of Divine service a matter of impossibility.

The stalls of a quire arranged in the stately mediæval manner are grouped about the altar like the seats around the apse of an early Christian church. Indeed the relative positions of the altar, the celebrant, and the stalls in a fifteenth-century quire are unchanged from that of an Italian church of the third century, save for the transference of the congregation from the eastern to the western portion of the church, an alteration which necessitated two minor changes, namely the squaring of the apsidal arrangement of the seats and the moving of the bishops' throne from the centre (where, under the new conditions, it would have blocked the quire doorway) to a position on the south side, east of the stalls.

The general plan of mediæval stalls is therefore remarkably constant, and it has altered very little from that in use in the early days of Christianity. The persistence of the traditional form of stall with shaped arms, semicircular back, and tip-up seat is also striking.

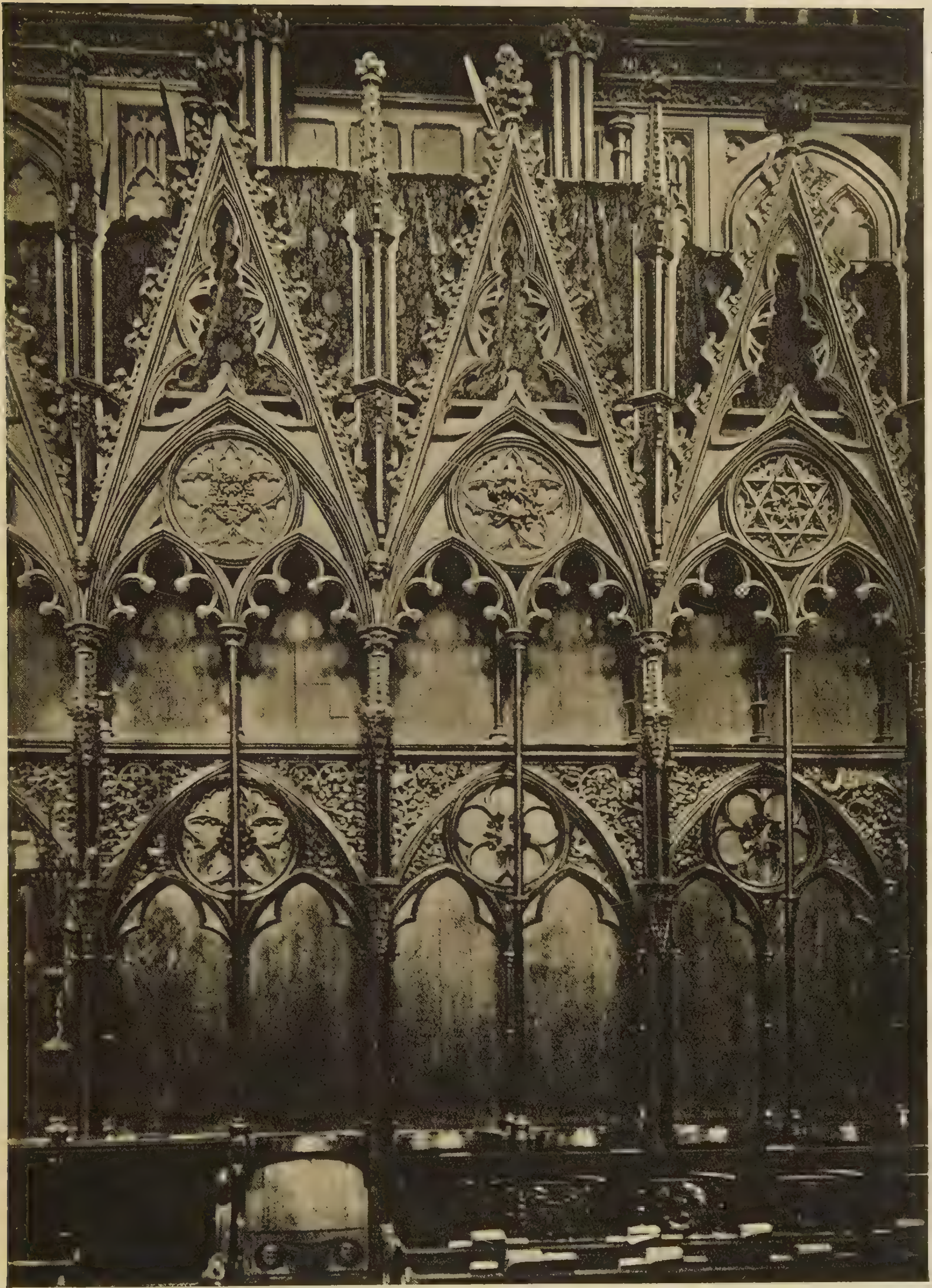
There is no stallwork of an earlier date than the first half of the thirteenth century. To this period belong the very plain stalls at Kidlington, Oxon.; Great Budworth, Cheshire; Weston-in-Gordano, Bristol; and Hemingborough, Yorks. (188); the misericords at Exeter, and a few in the later series of Christchurch, Hants, and Henry the Seventh's chapel at Westminster, and some simple arcaded desks at Rochester. These examples show that the traditional form of stall now so familiar had even then been invented and was in general use all over the country. Canopies of an advanced type were also employed in the greater churches. A few shafts still exist at Peterborough which appear to have come from the quire stalls, and the design of the original stalls in the quire of Westminster abbey is known, since they appear in a drawing of the seventeenth century by Sandford. These canopies took the form of a double arcade of acutely pointed arches, supported on slender turned shafts; the space between the two screens was vaulted.

The stalls of Winchester are the earliest which have survived in a perfect state, and even in this instance the desks are of later workmanship. They appear to date from the last decade of the thirteenth century. Two stalls are grouped beneath each of the canopies, which consist of two screens carrying a vault; the back screen is panelled up and decorated with fine geometrical tracery, while the front screen consists of alternate standards and turned shafts, rising from the elbows of the stalls and carrying a series of two-light windows with a crocketted gable over each, so steep as to foreshadow the tabernacled stalls of the fifteenth century.

The stalls of Chichester are typical work of the early fourteenth century. The canopies are of the double screen type, but a coving is substituted for the vault, and the pinnacles and arches of the front screen are framed into a horizontal beam. At Ely, twenty or thirty years later, this motive is developed by the addition of another story, consisting of a series of spired niches, but the fine stalls of Lancaster (181), of about the same date, are simply a single bay version of the Winchester design. For some reason stalls of the first half of the fourteenth century are very rare outside the greater churches. The stalls of the almshouse chapel at Chichester, which have survived in an almost perfect state, are the principal exception.

Many lovely sets of stalls date from the late fourteenth century. Some of these have canopies of rather unusual design. At Gloucester the stalls are backed by a lofty panelling, the upper portion of which is of open-work, while the canopies take the form of mere niche heads attached to the main framework. At Hereford (182) the Chichester type is carried forward a step further by making the arches of the front screen bow forward in the manner of a niche. In these examples the genesis of the design of the Lincoln stalls may be traced. The double screen, the front one supported on turned shafts, the double storied design, and the idea of treating each of the canopies as a niche, were no novelties. Nevertheless, the appearance of the tabernacled type of stall canopy at Lincoln about 1370 is a great surprise. These grand stalls influenced all subsequent work of importance. They were copied with various improvements at Chester (163, 165, 166), about ten years later, and with elaborated architectural detail, but simplified carving, at Nantwich (146) and Whalley and York.

A great deal of parochial stallwork belongs to the fifteenth century. Most stalls are, of course, without canopies of any kind, owing to lack of means, though some have high panelling behind them, or the screen against which they are fixed is designed to provide a vaulted canopy, as at Wingfield (260), Southwold, Suffolk (260), and Stamford St John, Lincs. Fifteenth-century stalls are generally distinguished by the excellence of their proportions and the telling use of the carved ornament, which is applied with such skill that, though it is rarely used lavishly, an admirable effect is produced with a very little expenditure of money or labour. Some of the East Anglian stalls, such as those of South Creake, Westhall, or Ludham, are almost destitute of ornament, but they are perfectly satisfactory owing to their good proportions. When there were ample funds the



WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL
LATE THIRTEENTH-CENTURY STALLS

fifteenth-century craftsman knew well how to produce a really rich effect, as in the fine stalls of Southwold, Suffolk (168); Beverley St Mary, Yorks. (170); and Gresford, Denbigh (167, 175), Ludlow (185), and Montgomery (185), with their rich panelled backings, and the stalls of the chapels of All Souls and New College at Oxford, are also notable examples.

Much fine work was also carried out in the greater churches. Sometimes the earlier and simpler types of canopies were adopted, as at Sherborne and Norwich, which are versions of the double screen type, or Christchurch, Hants, which has coved panelling. In the north the tabernacled type was preferred, as at Carlisle (184). Tabernacled stalls of a rather different kind were put up in the chapel of St George at Windsor, and Henry the Seventh's chapel at Westminster, in the last quarter of the fifteenth century. They are only distantly related to the tabernacled canopies of northern England, and display strong foreign influence. At Windsor the canopies took the form of fantastic barbicaned towers of almost incredible intricacy, alternated with equally elaborate spires of ecclesiastical appearance. The knights of the Order of the Garter sat under the towered canopies, and the canons under the spires. However, all the canopies were converted into towers when the Order was enlarged in the eighteenth century, and the spires were stored away as useless lumber. Some have found their way into private possession. At Westminster all the canopies end in little crocketted ogee domes. The tracery is varied and of extreme originality and beauty. The Lincoln tradition was perpetuated in the early sixteenth century by the fine tabernacled stalls of Ripon, Manchester (173, 184), and Beverley minster (166). These are of pure English design, but the stalls of Christchurch, Hants, although they incorporate canopies of the mid-fifteenth century and a few misericords of the thirteenth, are very strongly influenced by the Renaissance. Finally there are the splendid stalls of King's College, Cambridge, in which the only trace of the Gothic tradition is to be found in the stately planning, and the form of the misericord seats. All the carving is Renaissance in feeling.

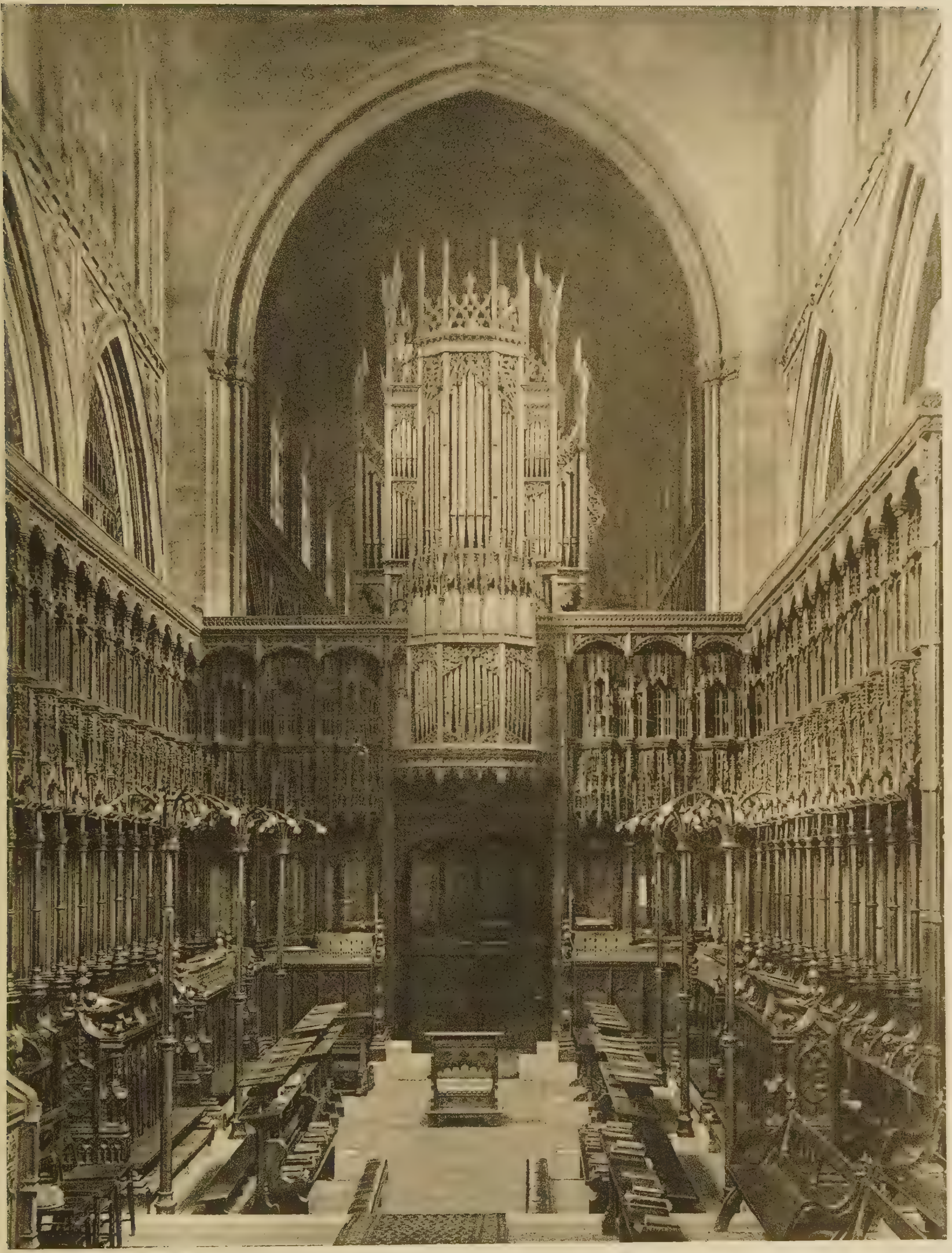
When the original arrangement of the stalls has not been altered in modern times it is invariably found that they are raised some inches above the floor of the chancel upon a platform of boards and joists, resting on a low stone wall. This is generally pierced with little traceried openings, either for ventilation or for acoustic reasons. At Trunch these openings are regular rose windows, while at Southwold (168) the stone plinth is of continuous pierced tracery. At Beverley St Mary (170), on the other hand, the curb is of wood, very delicately moulded, but without piercings of any kind. When there are two rows of stalls the back row is raised considerably above the front one.

The actual setting out of the plan was often a matter requiring some ingenuity. When there is no chancel arch, and the screen runs from wall to wall, and when there are no aisles to the chancel, the problem is very simple. The chief difficulty is the setting out of the corner seats. These look best when fixed as close as possible to the angle and arranged symmetrically, but in this case there is little room for the feet of the occupants when sitting, a state of affairs which is intensified when they kneel at the desk. To avoid this one of the angle seats was sometimes fixed about a foot further from the angle to allow room for the feet. At Gresford this correction is made in the stalls facing east, while at Fairford it is made in the side ranges. When there is a chancel arch the question arises as to whether the stalls should be set back under the arch or whether they should follow the line of the wall face. In the first case it is not possible to work in so many stalls, but more clear space is left in the chancel, while in the second case a waste space is left between the back of the stalls and the screen, as at Leighton Buzzard (167), which must be boarded over or cased up in some way. The same problem occurs when there are arches in the side walls, opening on to the chancel aisles. In parish churches the most usual arrangement is for the main stalls to be set back under the chancel arch against the screen, and for the side ranges to be independent, stopping against the respond of the chancel arch; it is not unusual for the side ranges to be mere benches, as at North Marston, and sometimes as at Winthorpe (175); not even the main stalls are of the time-honoured form with misericords.

An ample space is allowed between the seat and the desk. Gaps are left in the latter at convenient intervals to serve as gangways by means of which the occupants of the back row of stalls could reach their seats without disturbing the dignitaries in the terminal seats, for in mediæval days those taking part in the service did not make a ceremonial entrance in procession, but made their way to their seats as soon as they reached the church. These gangways were also useful for the leaders of the singing to make their way from their stalls to the quire lectern. In the greater churches, where there were two rows of stalls, the lower ranges were stopped a couple of feet short of the main ranges facing east. The lower seats were sometimes mere benches, as at Chester (165), but occasionally they were provided with seats of equal importance to those of the main stalls, as at Beverley minster (166).

In a number of parish churches the edge of the platform is allowed to project to form a little ledge for the singing-boys to sit upon, as at Trunch, or a low and narrow bench is provided in a very few instances, as at Winthorpe (175). At Sefton the fronts of the desks are planned as a series of niche-like recesses to form seats for the quire boys, but in the great majority of cases no provision whatever is made for them beyond a sort of projection from the front edge of the desk standards, keeping them from encroaching upon the gangways. This absence of seats for the boys has led some antiquaries, ignorant of the mediæval service books and the evidence of churchwardens' accounts, to maintain that the surpliced quire of singing-boys is a modern invention, but there is not the slightest doubt that it is a survival of a mediæval custom. The modern mistake which has brought the surpliced quire into disrepute is to have more boys than can be properly trained, and to cumber the chancel with unnecessary seats and desks for them.

So much for the general plan. The sections were very conveniently proportioned and are generally comfortable for kneeling, standing, or sitting. In the true misericord stall the seats when turned down are about seventeen inches above the ground, and the back panelling is sloped, while knobbed elbows are provided on which the hands may rest. When standing the misericord is tipped up, allowing



MANCHESTER COLLEGIATE CHURCH, STALLWORK, 1508.

ample room for those passing along the gangway to their stalls, and its ledge affords a slight support to the body, while the elbows can be rested on the arms of the stalls. The desks are not intended for singing from, but for use when kneeling.

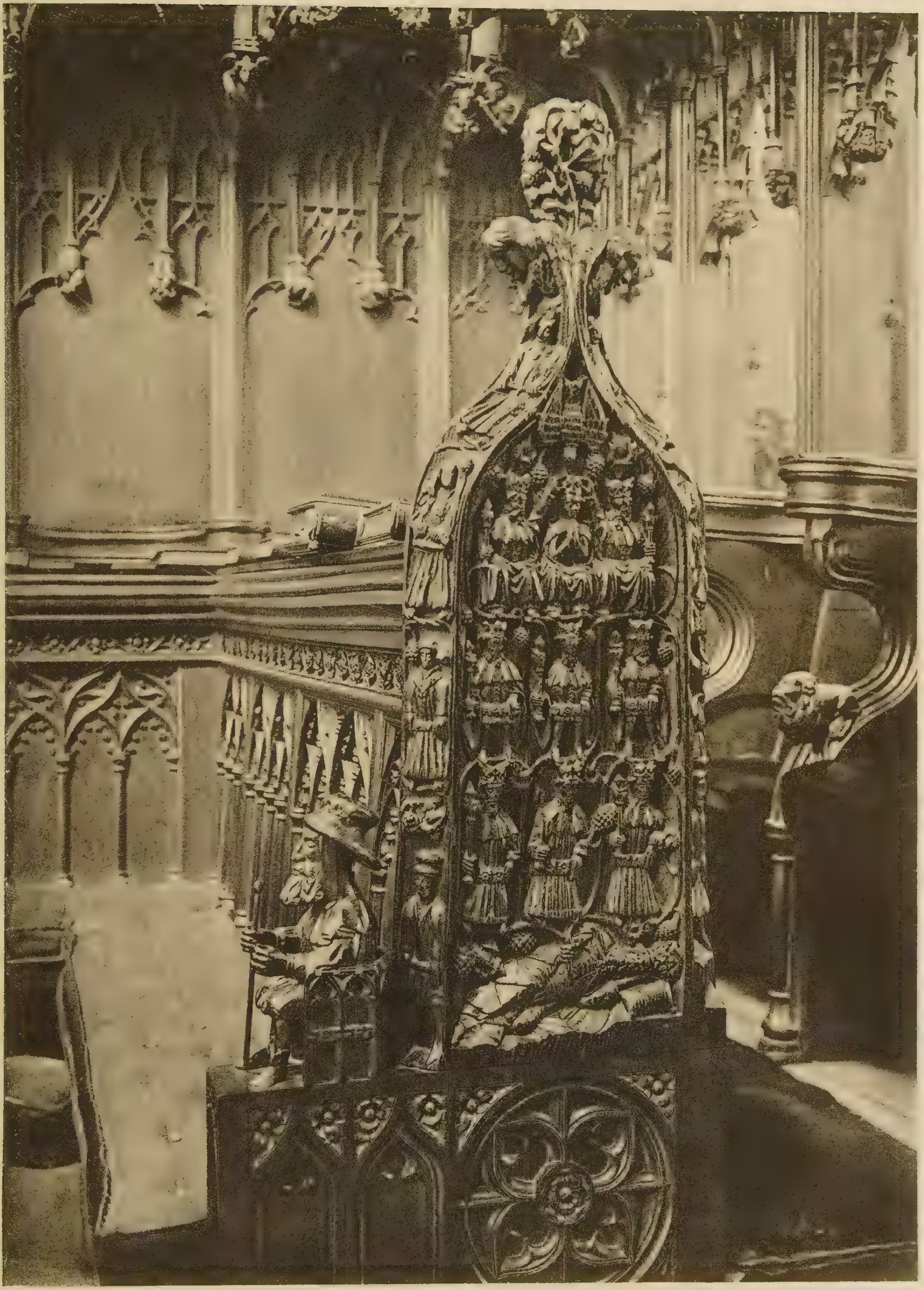
The construction of a misericord stall is very peculiar. The shaped standards or elbows are cut out of wide planks. They are notched over a deep and massive bottom rail (to which the misericords are hinged in many cases), and are housed into the massive capping, which is very wide and hollowed out with semicircular recesses to form curved backs for the stalls. The space between this capping and the bottom rail is filled in with thin wide boards, forming a sloping back. The capping is often fixed square with the back and is consequently tilted up in front. In most cases the back of the stalls is hidden by the screen against which they are fixed, but in a few cases it is concealed by special panelling, as at Beverley St Mary (170), or it is exposed as at Higham Ferrers (177), where the parclose screen is built on the top of the stalls.

The misericords (188-190) are generally carved in the solid with a typical disregard for wasted material. They are sometimes pivoted to the standards by a pin worked in the solid, and they rest on the lower edge of a quadrant-shaped sinking in the standards. An alternative method is to hinge them to the upper edge of the bottom rail. The shape of the standards is therefore governed very largely by the misericord and the position of its pivots and sinkings. The front edge below the seat is usually vertical, and is wrought into a little shaft, above which the moulded edge follows the path of the front edge of the misericord, finally turning upwards and outwards to support the arms. These are worked out of the solid capping, and are generally very deeply and elaborately moulded, but these mouldings almost always die out against the back, probably for practical reasons of comfort. The front of the arm is usually semicircular on plan, giving the effect of a little capital when seen from the front; sometimes a cluster of capitals is attempted, as at Southwold (190), where the plan is a trefoil.

The standards of the terminal seats are sometimes left to tell their own tale, but in more important instances they are hidden by specially treated end standards, as at Norbury (180) and Higham Ferrers (180), where they are shaped. At Southwold they are rectangular, and are finished with a cresting. In the canopied stalls projecting panelled wings are necessarily provided to support the overhanging canopies, and these have a very stately effect. At Hemington (180) and Wantage the end standards themselves are continued above the top rail, and are elaborately shaped and carved.

The desks were seldom less than a foot wide, and were sloped at a decided angle. They are often moulded on the front edge, and are frequently of wedge-shaped section. They are housed into the end standards at a height seldom more than thirty inches above the floor. The space between the front edge of the desk and the sill is filled in with boarding or panelling, which afforded a good opportunity for decorative treatment. At South Creake the boarding is strengthened with an occasional moulded muntin, while at Winthorpe (175) it is stiffened with a band of tracery and mullions, planted upon the surface of the boarding. Generally real panelled construction was adopted, as at Edlesborough (172), where the desk fronts have rails and styles of their own, instead of the desk acting as top rail and the standards as styles. In this case each panel has a traceried head, grooved into the frame, like those of the Midland type of screen. At Oxford cathedral (171) the tracery of each panel is designed on the lines of a two-light window, with a little central mullion, now lost. At Beverley minster a band of tracery is introduced as a sort of plinth, while at Southwold (171) the panels are completely traceried from top to bottom. Linen panels are sometimes employed, as at Thame and Hillesden (172); in these cases a middle rail is introduced, giving two rows of panels. The muntins were sometimes emphasised by the addition of a small buttress or pinnacle, as at Oxford (171) and Southwold. In the latter instance the panels are grouped in pairs by this means, the alternate muntins being left unbuttressed (171).

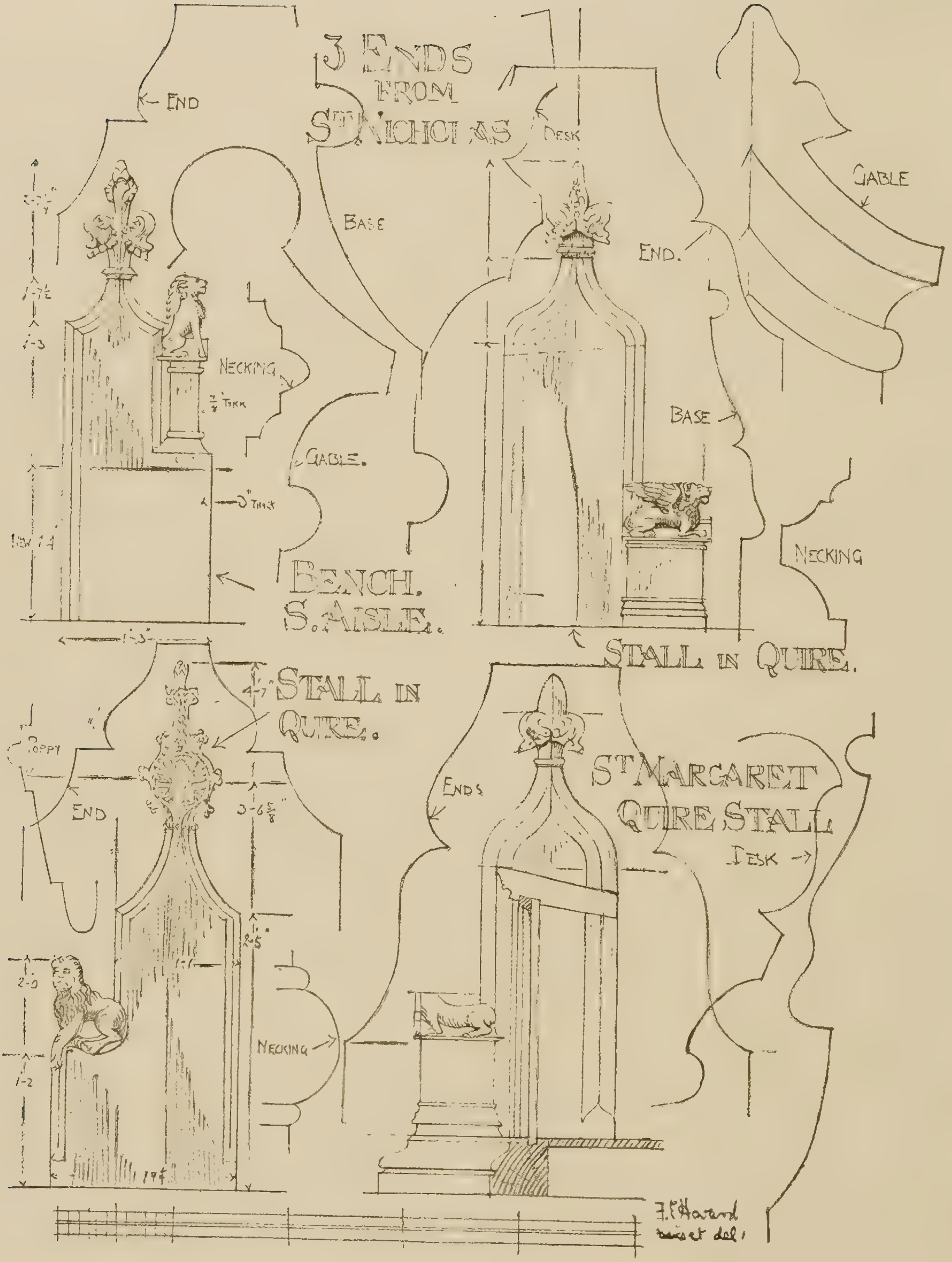
The desk standards were shaped in the majority of instances, and ended in a carved poupee head, but there are a few instances in which the standards are stopped under the desks, as at Hillesden,



CHESTER QUIRE, DEAN'S STALL-END, 1380.

or are cut off at an angle an inch or two above the desks, as at Christchurch, Hants (179). In the West they are sometimes of rectangular outline, and are carried up above the desks, ending in carved and pierced figures, as at St Ives. The edges of the standards are moulded, and occasionally enriched with a trail of foliage, as at Southwold (171). In two of the Chester desk ends the trail takes the form of a tree of Jesse (174). In a few instances the shaped standards are crocketted, as at Ilsington, Devon, and King's Lynn, Norfolk (158). The face of the standard was sometimes left plain, as at Higham Ferrers (177), but when funds would permit it was traceried, sometimes very elegantly, as at Jarrow (174) and Ludlow (174). Heraldry is often introduced, particularly in the later work, as at Wensley (176), Durham University College (176), Hawarden (176), and Manchester (173), where the tracery is very deeply sunk in two orders. An interesting treatment occurs at Bratoft, Lincs. (178), where the ends are plain save for a sunk, diamond-shaped panel with a shield and foliaged spandrels. The richest stalls had niches with carved figures of saints sunk in their desk standards, as at Barkestone, Leicestershire (177), where the niches, with canopies of elaborate architectural design, contain magnificent figures of apostles. These are certainly not parochial, but must have been brought from some great abbey church. Very simple stall ends with figures of St George exist at Hull (177). A pretty feature in some of the more important stalls is the carving of a little scene, such as the Annunciation, on the inner side of the standard above the desk, as at Chester. The ogee shaping of the top of the standards gives much character to the design. In some instances the ogee is symmetrical, but in other cases it is distorted to suit the slope of the desk, as at Norbury (180), a reasonable but not very beautiful treatment. Some start with a very easy curve, as at Hull and Gresford (175), while in other instances the lower curve is of very short radius, as at Oxford (178) and Bratoft, or the lower curve is omitted altogether, as at Fairford. These differences of design are all to be found in the stalls from King's Lynn (158).

One of the most striking characteristics of the fifteenth-century



KING'S LYNN STALLS

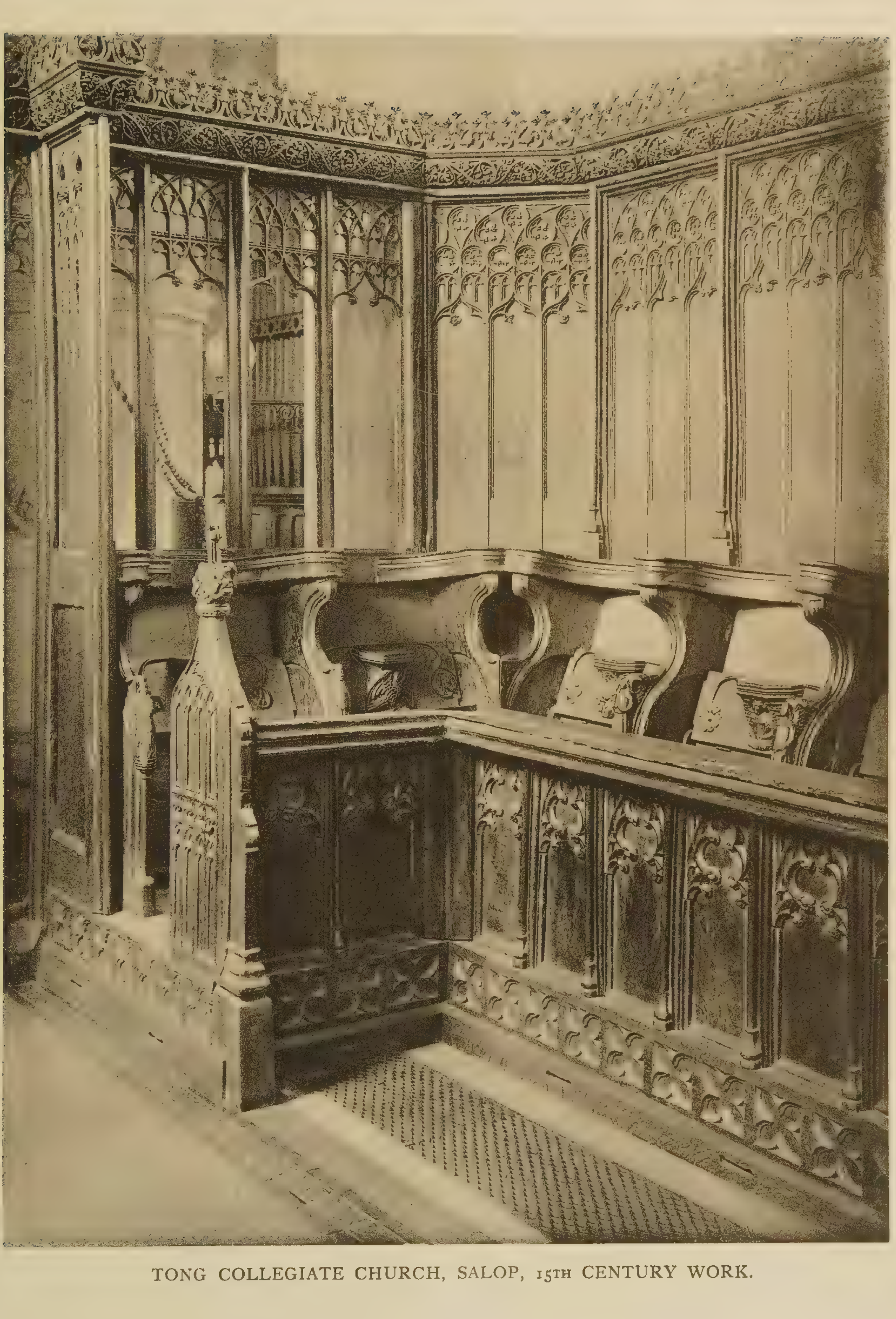
desk standards is the buttress-like projection attached to the front edge. This is sometimes a mere shaped buttress with moulded offsets, as at Leighton Buzzard (167), but sometimes the mouldings are returned and die into the moulded edge of the standard, and the buttress is sometimes thick enough to be decorated with sunk panels, as at Beverley St Mary (170) and Oxford cathedral (171). At Southwold (171) the buttresses are great octagonal shafts with elaborately decorated sides, terminating in moulded capitals which now carry turned balls, but may have been for the support of carved figures. In very many cases the buttresses carry little platforms on which heraldic beasts disport themselves. These are a characteristic of the East Anglian work (158).

A peculiar and elaborate form of buttress is employed in the more important stalls in the North of England, as at Wensley (176) and Manchester (173). It is built up of a little gabled canopy standing on a plinth, through the windows of which a square shaft may be seen. This penetrates the roof and carries a platform with a beast in the usual manner. Other standards have curved elbows attached to mask the ends of the boys' ledges, as at Winthorpe (175). These usually ramp up in an ogee curve, and are finished with a carved finial. Sometimes a carved animal sits upon them.

The simplest version of the canopy consists of panelling fixed against the wall above the back of the stalls. The muntins are generally spaced out to suit the stall, and are decorated with buttresses or pinnacles. The panels may be left plain, as at St Mary's, Oxford, or they may be traceried, as at Sudbury and New College, Oxford. Little canopied niches are worked into the tracery of the panelling of the stalls at Ludlow and Montgomery (185), a moulded cornice runs along the top, and may have considerable projection. In many examples this cornice takes the form of an overhanging coving, as at Abergavenny and Christchurch, and hanging tracery may depend from the upper beam, as at St Peter's, Hereford. At St David's the panelling is vaulted instead of being coved, and the upper beam carries a kind of rood-loft front. The whole composition is founded upon the arched screen of the period. At Gloucester (164) and Hexham the overhang is obtained by fixing elaborate open-work niche heads to the surface of the back panelling.

The next group of canopies in order of complication is that in which a light screen stands on the arms of the stalls, about eighteen inches in front of the back panelling, and the space is roofed over with a vault or coving. Winchester (151) is the earliest surviving example, but others once existed at Peterborough and Westminster. In the latter the front screen consisted of an acutely pointed arcade, supported on slender turned shafts. At Winchester and Lancaster (181) a series of tracery heads beneath tall straight-sided gables takes the place of the arcade. Chichester is a fourteenth-century version of the Westminster stalls, in which crocketted ogee arches, separated by carved pinnacles, are used instead of lancet arches. There are a few fifteenth-century examples of this motive, as at Sherborne, where the arches are almost semicircular, and are richly cusped, while the spandrels are carved in relief. In at least two instances a double storied version is found: at Ely (183), in the fourteenth century, the upper story consists of a series of pinnacled niches for sculpture, while at Norwich, in the fifteenth century, it takes the form of a pair of rather meaningless panels with ogee-arched tracery. At the cathedral and All Saints, Hereford (182), the arches of the front arcade break forward on plan like the head of a niche. In the fine series of tabernacled canopies this motive is elaborated. At Lincoln the niches are three-sided (half-hexagon) on plan, with a pinnacle at each angle, and a bowing ogee with a gable behind attached to each face. Within the little forest of gables and pinnacles a traceried polygonal tower rises, and upon its summit there is a delicate spired niche, flanked by flying buttresses, which once sheltered a figure of a saint. At Chester (165) the bowing ogees of the lower stage are trefoiled, and in the lovely tabernacle-work which is carried round the pulpitum (163) three-spired niches are crowded in over each canopy, a motive which was followed at Nantwich (146), York, and Carlisle (184). Another elaboration is the attaching of a niche canopy to each face of the main niche, giving an effect of extreme complication. At Ripon and Manchester (184) these are triangular on plan, with two ogee arches to each, but in the destroyed stalls of York they were half-hexagon and had three ogee arches.

The carving of the misericords is a very interesting feature of English stallwork. The subjects of the carvings were gathered from many and various sources—from the Old and New Testaments,



TONG COLLEGIATE CHURCH, SALOP, 15TH CENTURY WORK.

from mythology, from the Bestiaries, and from the popular tales and romances of the day. Every-day life was also reproduced or satirised, and heraldry was freely used, particularly in the later work. It is impossible to do more than deal with the subject of their design in these pages. Even the earliest misericords conform to the same general type—a little corbel with a moulded edge supported on carving, either of foliage, as at Hemingborough (188) and Ludlow (189); figure work, as at Wells (188) and Carlisle (189); grotesque, as at Loversall (188); or architectural motives, as at North Marston and Southwold (190). The mouldings of the corbel do not die into the under surface of the seat, but meander downwards along its surface, and terminate in a bunch of foliage or other carving. This same motive of central corbel in high relief, flanked by side subjects in rather lower relief, hanging from stems, is found nearly everywhere and at all dates. The chief exceptions are the misericords at Gloucester, in which the moulding of the corbel is continued round the underside of the seat as a kind of cusped border, and those of Sherborne, where the side subjects are merged into the central group.

The actual corbel in the earliest examples is approximately rectangular on plan, with canted or rounded angles, as at Hemingborough and Chichester; but as time went on a semi-polygonal plan was adopted, with slightly hollowed sides, as at Southwold and North Marston. This shape is more effective, and rather more practical than the earlier plan. In many examples the corbel is a mere overhanging shelf, beneath which the carving, which is marvellously undercut, is very artlessly disposed, as at Carlisle (189), but sometimes the corbel is more like a capital, round the hollow bell of which the carvings are applied, as at Ludlow (189). In other cases a rounded lump of wood is left below the corbel, and the figures are carved in comparatively low relief upon its surface, as at Cartmel (189).

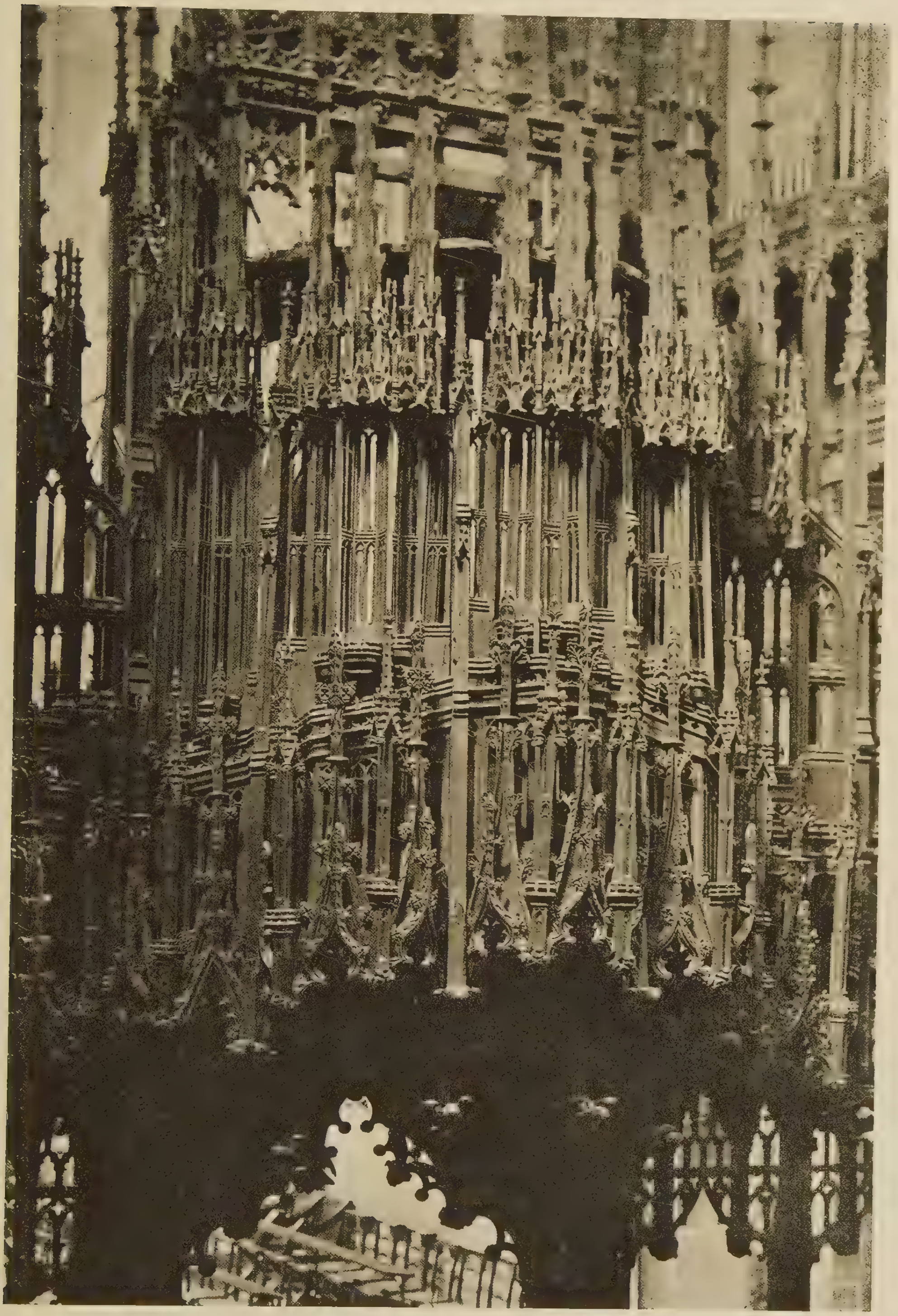
The problem of designing the figure subjects was obviously to give them the true character of supporters, while allowing them to tell their tale clearly. Usually the figures are so intent upon their own business that they have no time to attend to their proper function, and the result is amusing rather than admirable, but when both ends are attained the result is excellent; there are few finer mediæval carvings than the King Alexander corbel at Wells (188), the Mermen at Chichester (188) and Carlisle, or the Birds and Owl at Norwich (190).

The side subjects are often charming examples of mediæval design. The stems of the earlier misericords usually burst into foliage very shortly after they get clear of the corbel, as at Chichester, but in later work they attain some length before they sprout into leaves or roses. In many cases these do not grow out of the stem, but are regarded as a means of stopping it. The stem is very often curved round as a frame to a figure subject, or grotesques, as at Southwold (190), a treatment which is usually very charming. The example from Christchurch shows the same motives clothed in Renaissance detail (190).

In the oldest examples the elbows usually take the form of a human portrait or grotesque head, a contortionist or a grotesque beast, cleverly disposed to a circular form, as at Cartmel (187). They are generally splendidly carved with a few sure strokes of the tool, as at Chester (168, 187) and Southwold (168). After the middle of the fifteenth century these gave place, in the North of England, to little figures of angels, standing on the shaft of the standard, with their bodies thrown back against the curved moulding. One of the earliest examples is the six-winged cherub in the Chester series (187). They may be clothed in albs, as at Beverley, or in their feathers, as at Tong (187) and Gresford (169). Demi-angels are found in the rather unusual design of the stalls at Beaumaris (169).

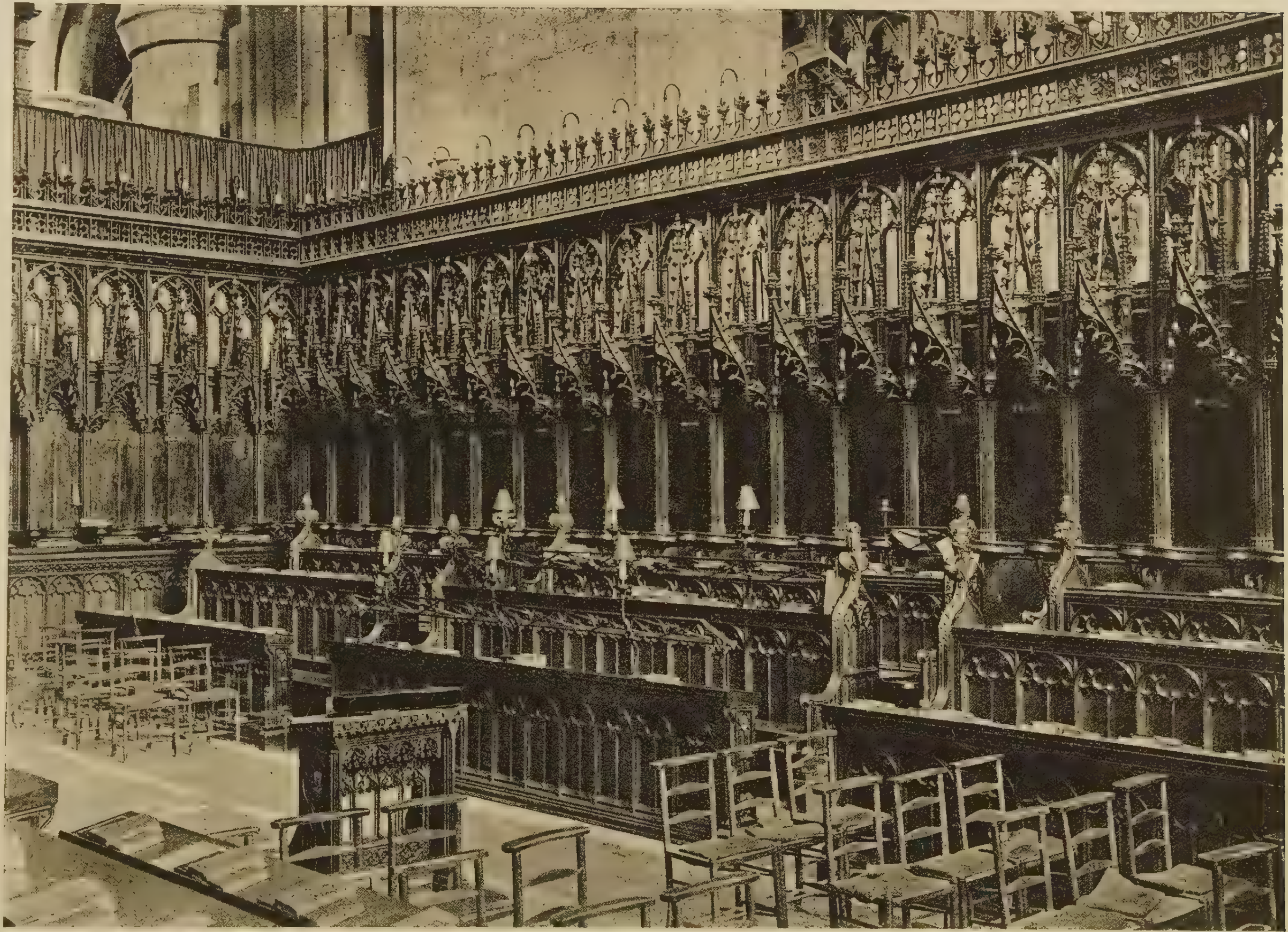
The poppy heads are of three main types. The commonest is the familiar trefoiled shape, a tall spike, flanked by two large crockets, which generally hang down, as at Oxford (178), but occasionally grow upwards. Sometimes circular balls of foliage, as at Ludlow (174, 186), or roses, as at Astbury (186), take the place of the crockets. In the second type the crockets are omitted, leaving only the central spike, as in the Beauchamp chapel at Warwick. In the third type the finial takes the form of a moulded capital on which a beast may stand or sit, as at Lavenham. Normally a poppy head is composed of foliage, but figure work is often introduced. The central spike is often carved into a saint, as at Gresford (186), or bishop, or two back to back, while the crockets are often demi-angels or dragons, or occasionally grotesque heads, as at Rattlesden (186).

THE TABERNACLE WORK OF THE PULPITUM



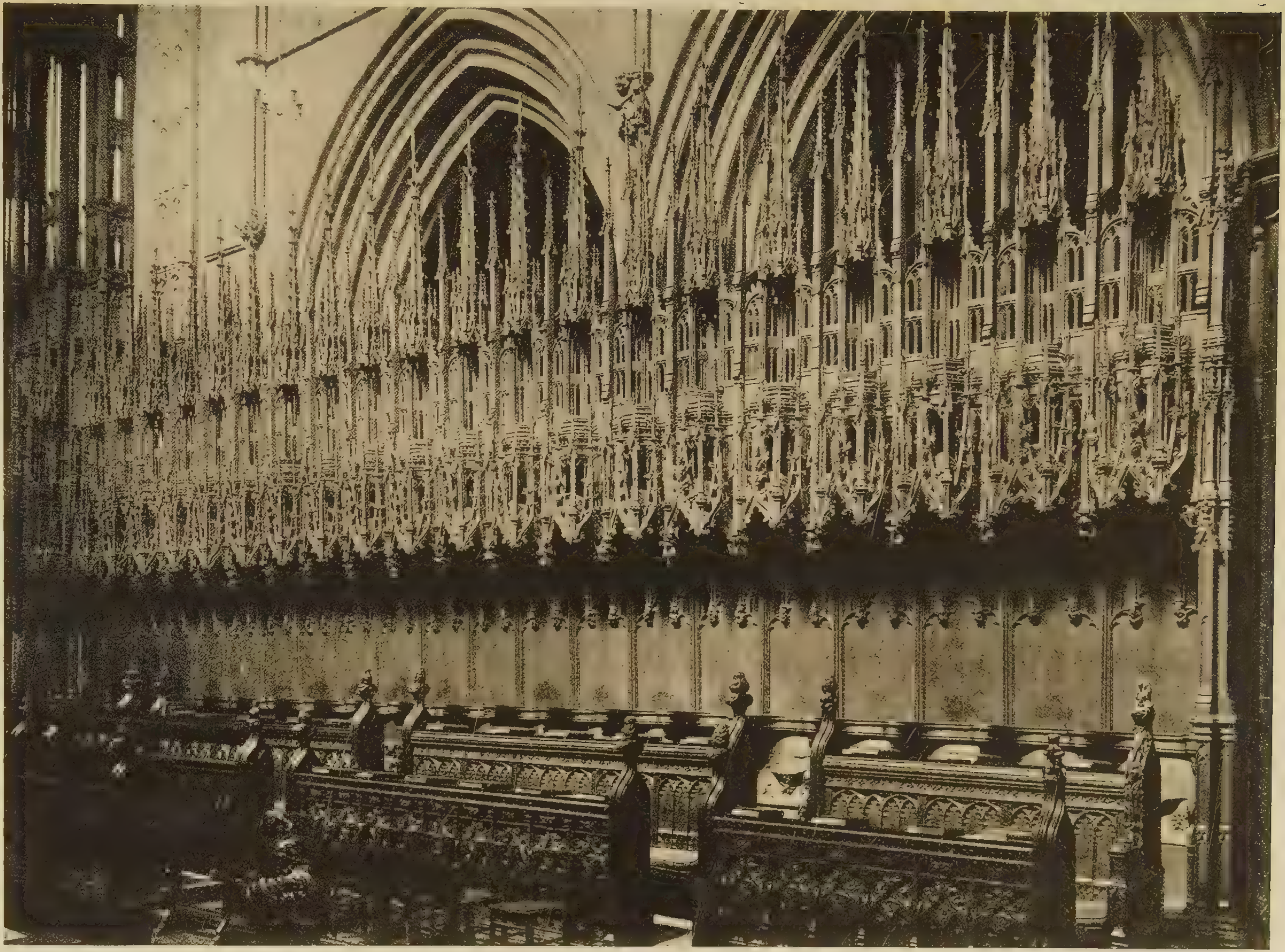
CHESTER CATHEDRAL

FOURTEENTH-CENTURY DESIGN—PANELLED STALL BACKS, WITH APPLIED TABERNACLES

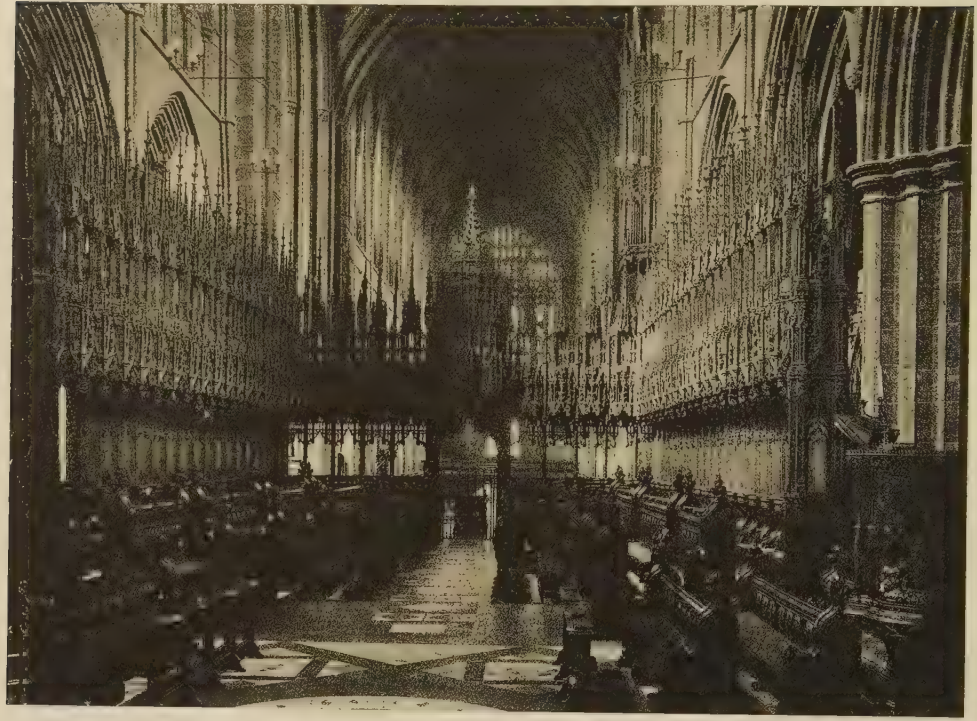


GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL, NORTH SIDE OF QUIRE

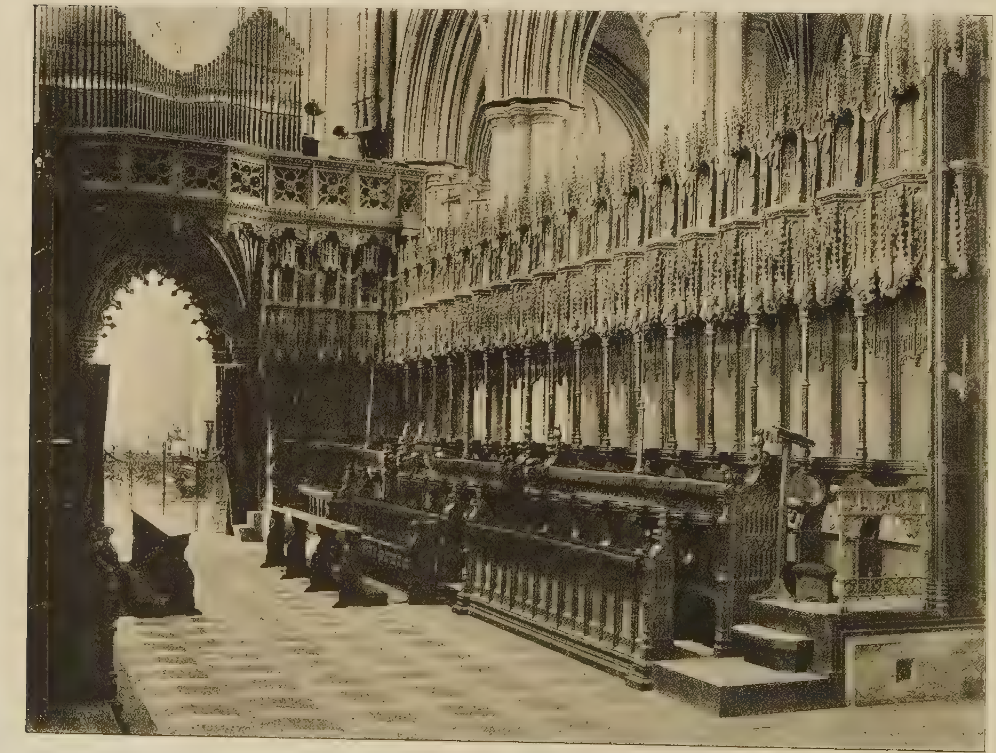
LATE FOURTEENTH-CENTURY DESIGN—THE STALLS OF A GREAT ABBEY CHURCH



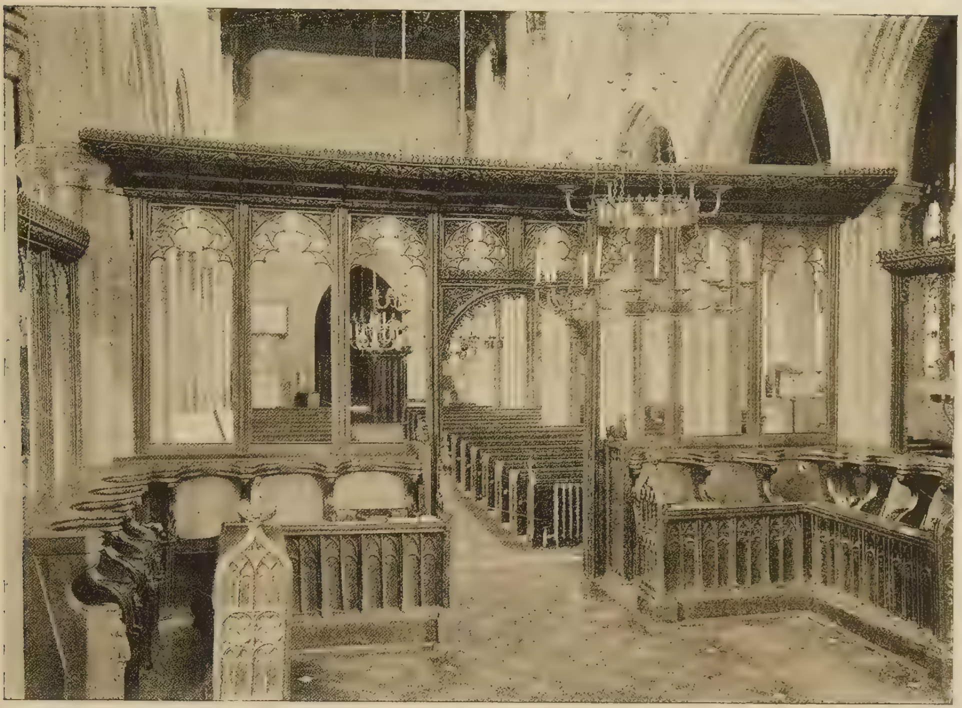
CHESTER CATHEDRAL STALLS, NORTH SIDE OF QUIRE



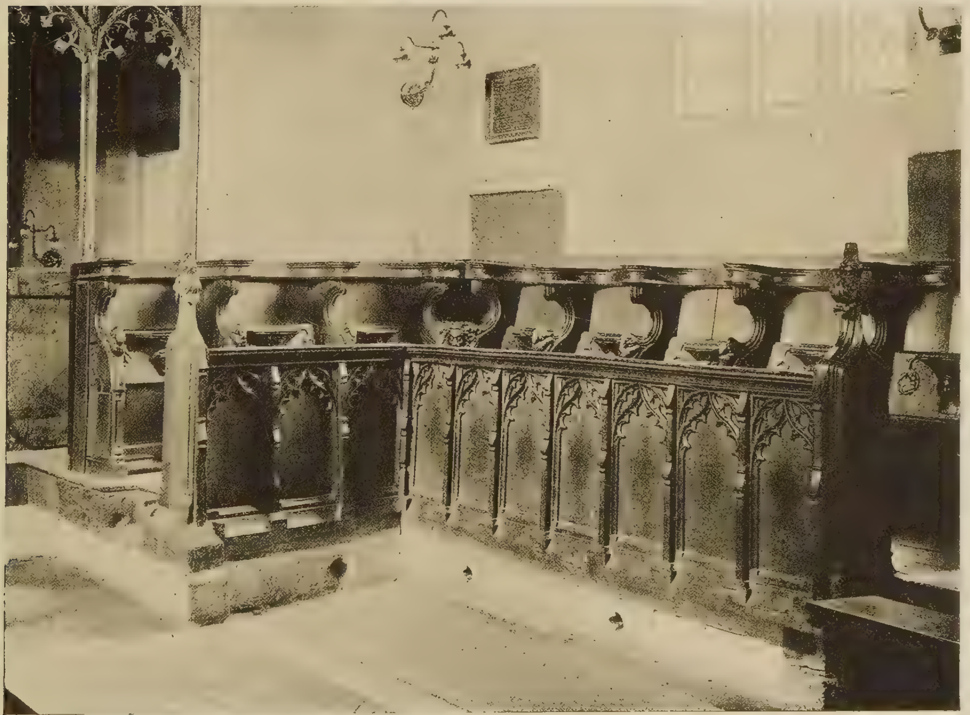
CHESTER CATHEDRAL, MONASTIC, LATE FOURTEENTH CENTURY



BEVERLEY MINSTER, COLLEGIATE, EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY

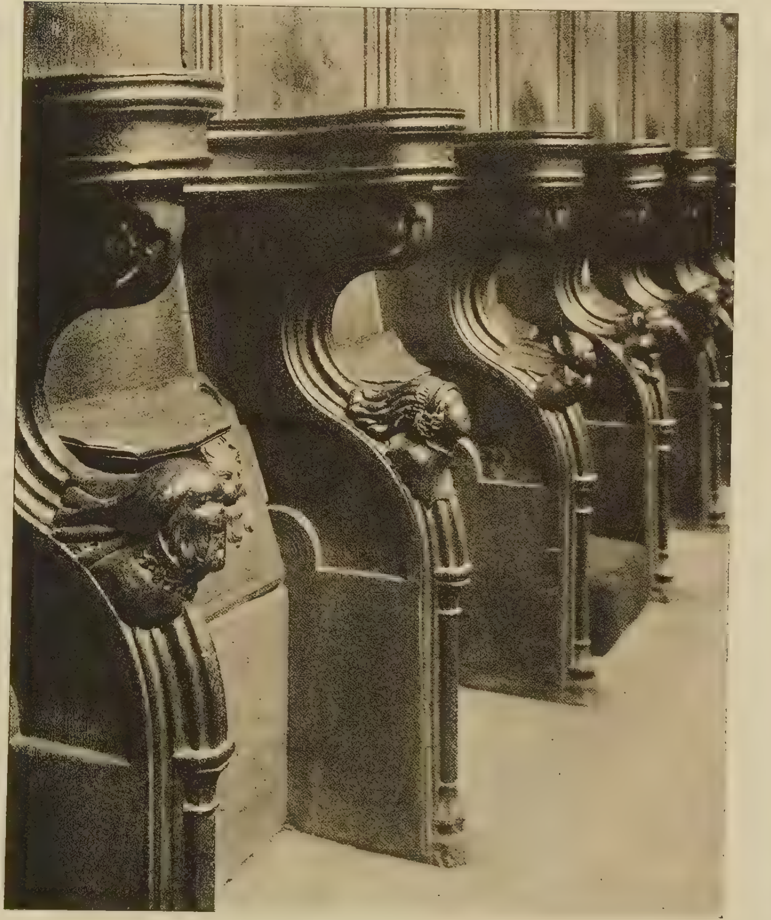


GRESFORD, DENBIGH, LATE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

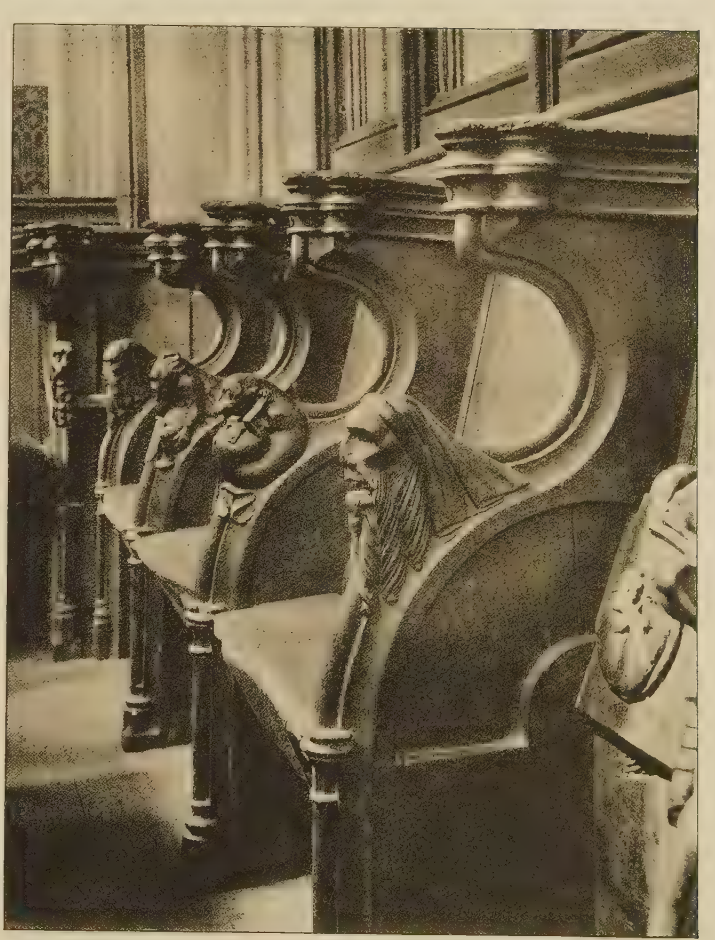


LEIGHTON BUZZARD, BEDS., FIFTEENTH CENTURY

THE STALLS OF A GREAT ABBEY AND A PARISH CHURCH COMPARED

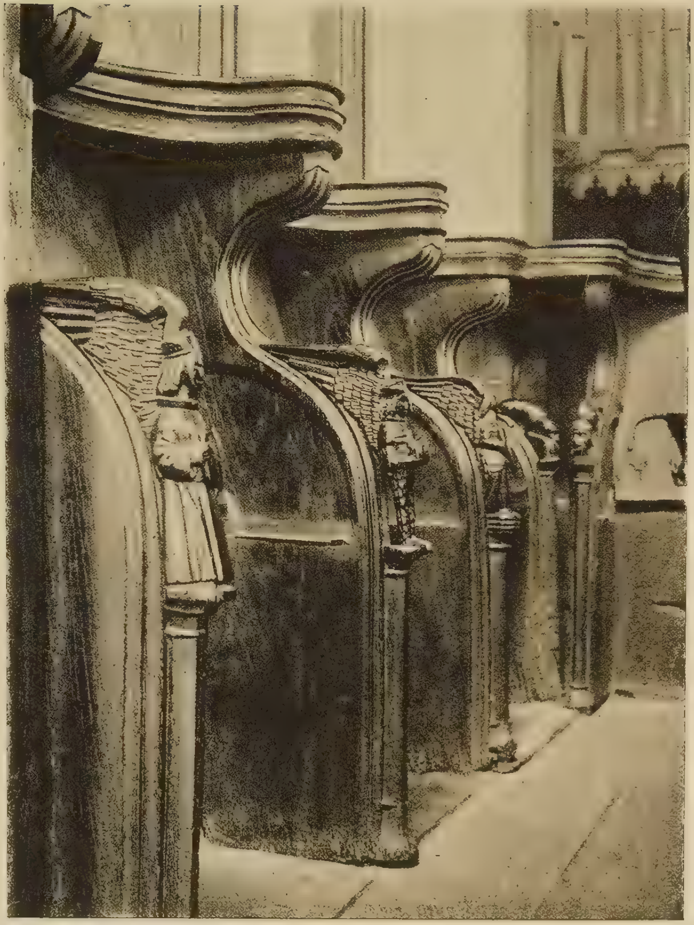


CHESTER CATHEDRAL, LATE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

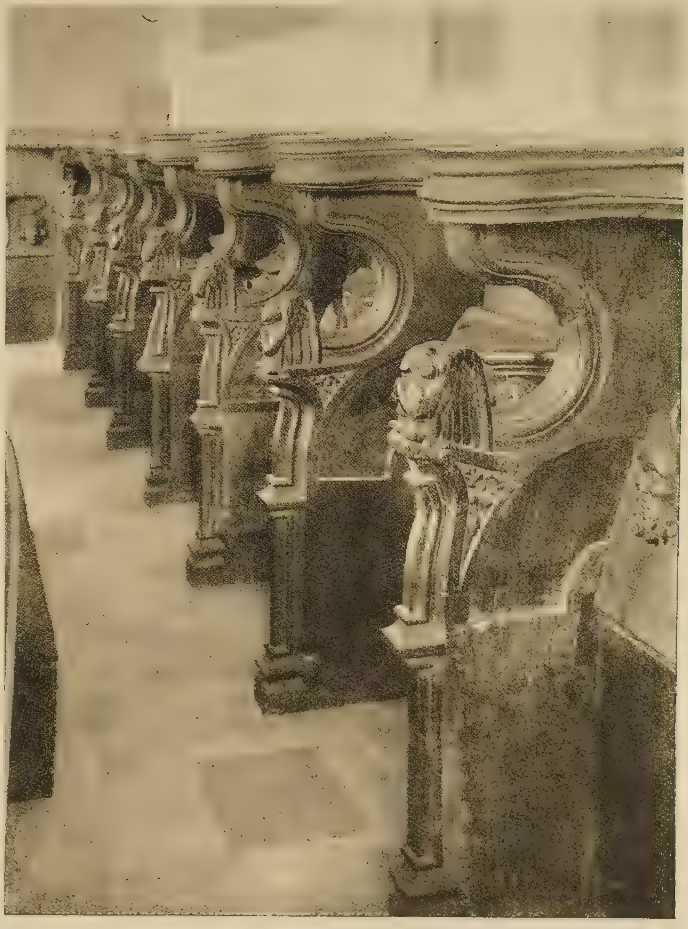


SOUTHWOLD, SUFFOLK, FIFTEENTH CENTURY

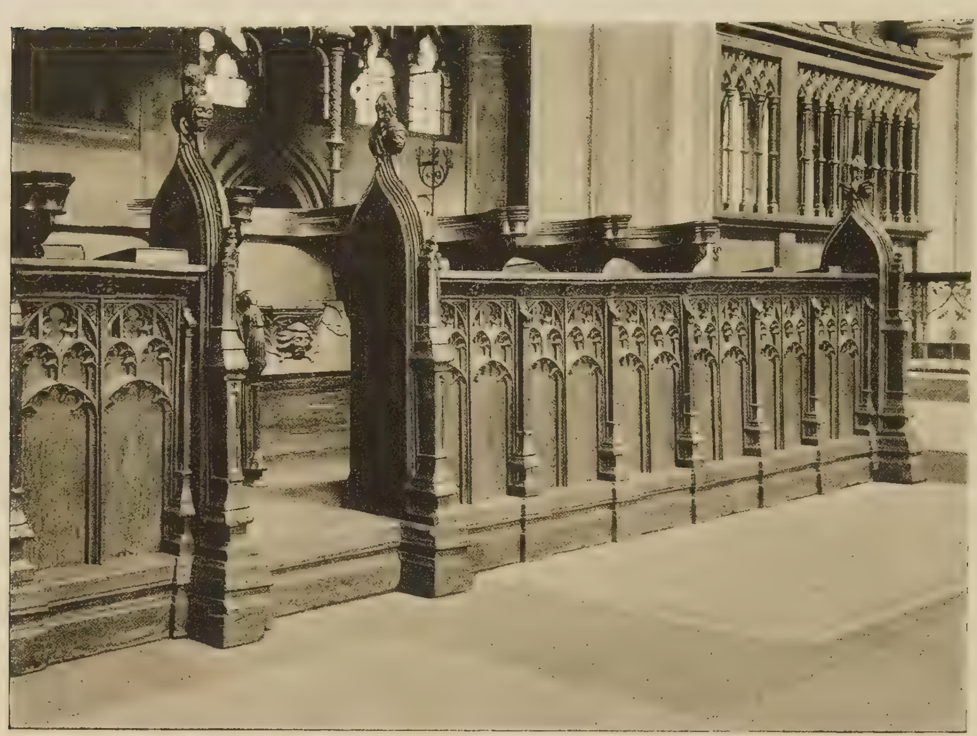
THE LATER STYLE, WITH ANGELS AS ELBOWS



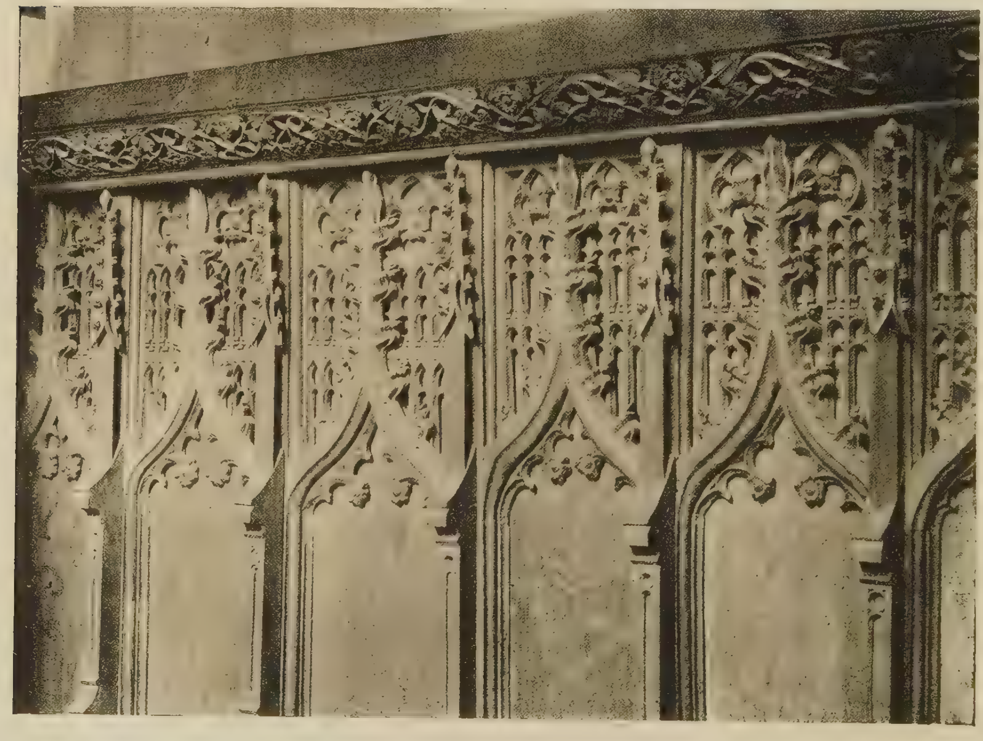
GRESFORD, DENBIGH, PAROCHIAL



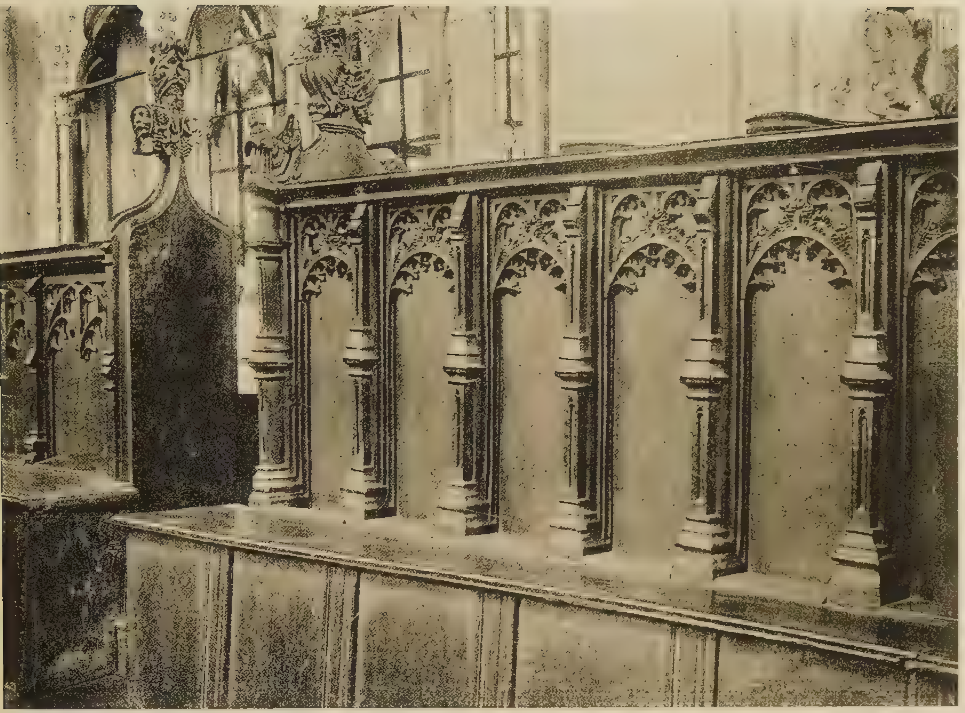
BEAUMARIS, ANGLESEA, PERHAPS MONASTIC



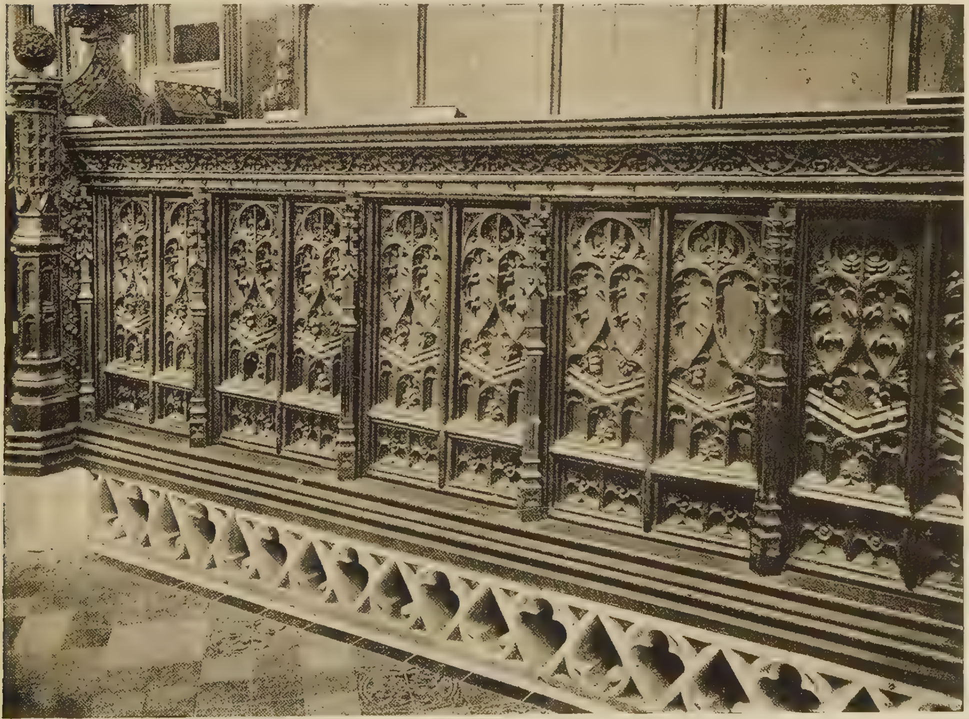
BEVERLEY ST MARY, TWIN PANELS WITH TRACERIED HEAD, MID-FIFTEENTH CENTURY



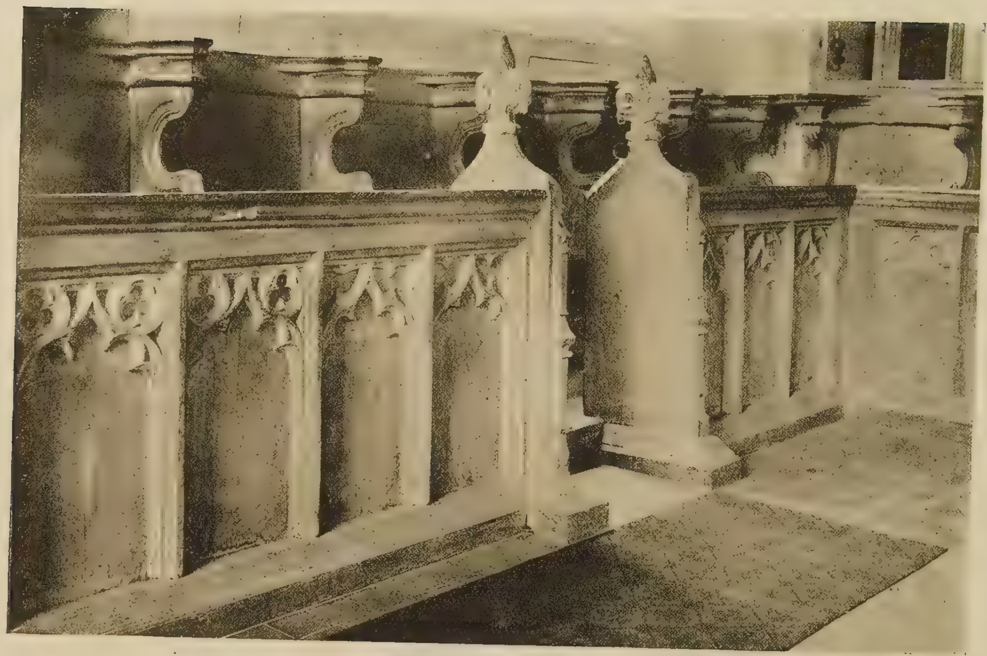
BEVERLEY ST MARY, PANELLING BEHIND SEATS



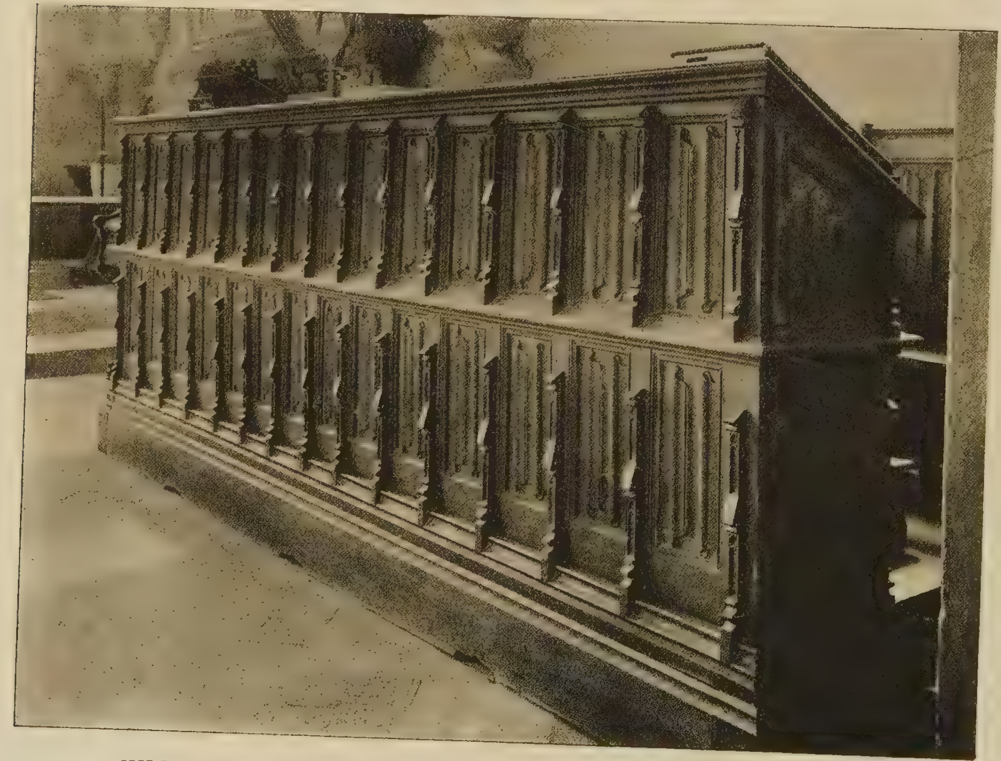
OXFORD CATHEDRAL, LATIN CHAPEL, EARLY FIFTEENTH CENTURY



SOUTHWOLD, SUFFOLK, PANELS COMPLETELY TRACERIED, LATE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

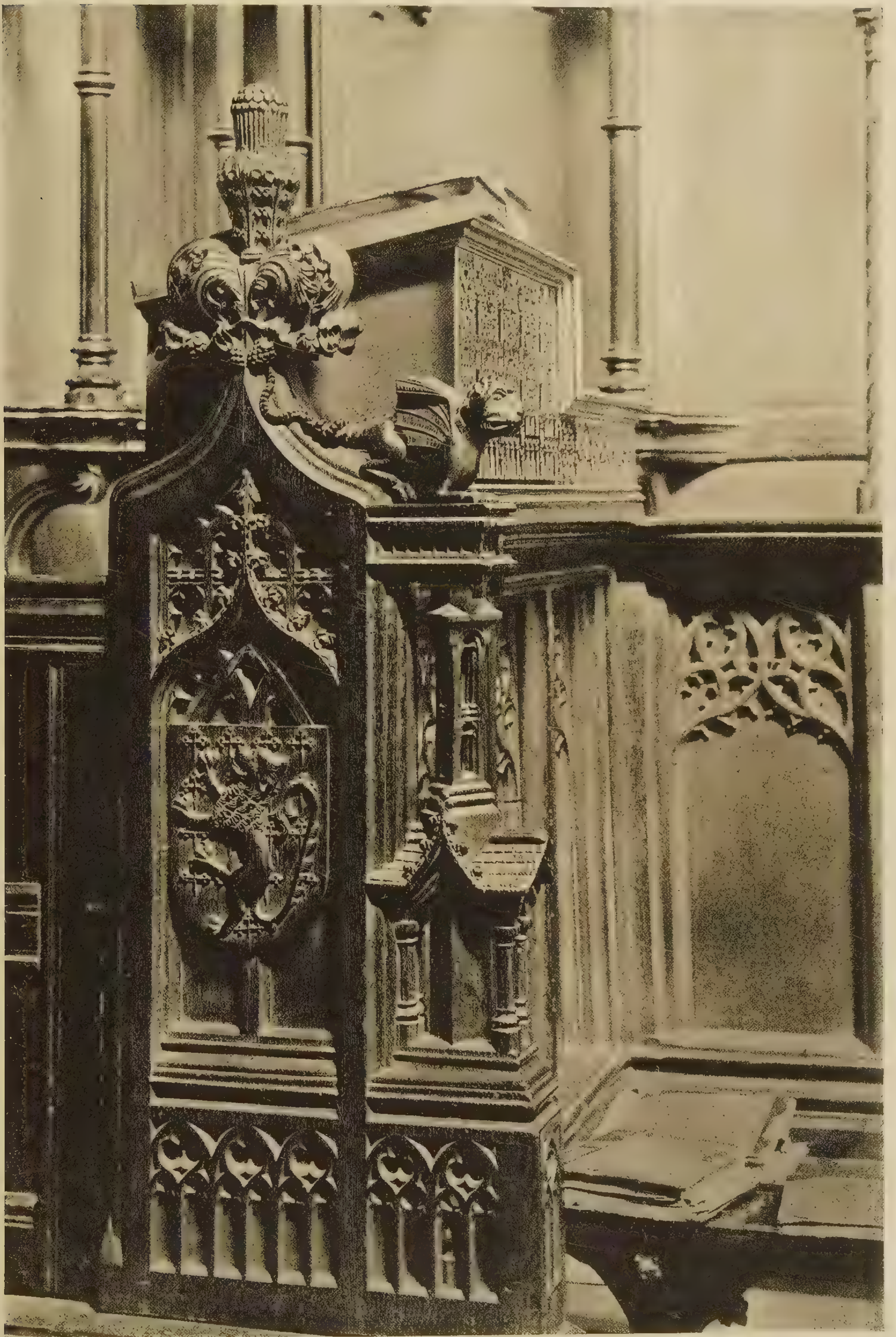


EDLESBOROUGH, BUCKS., TRACERIED HEADS, EARLY FIFTEENTH CENTURY



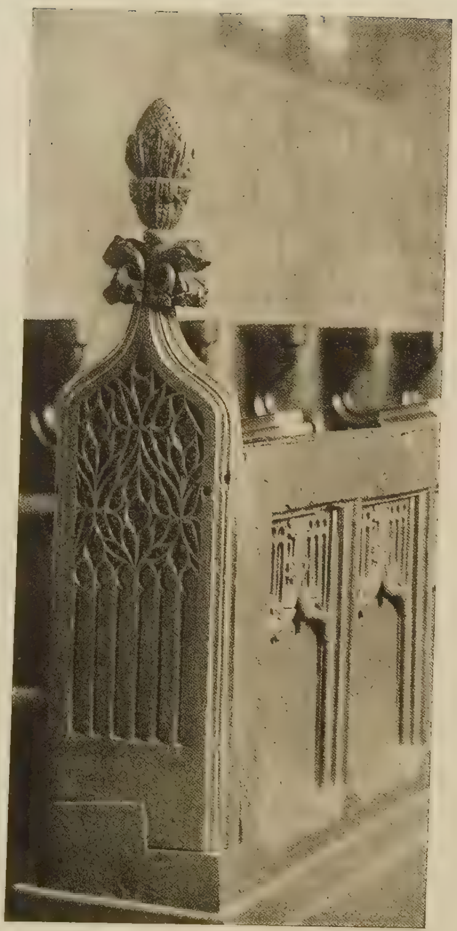
HILLESDEN, BUCKS., LINEN PANELS, EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY

HERALDIC DESK ENDS—NORTH OF ENGLAND TYPE

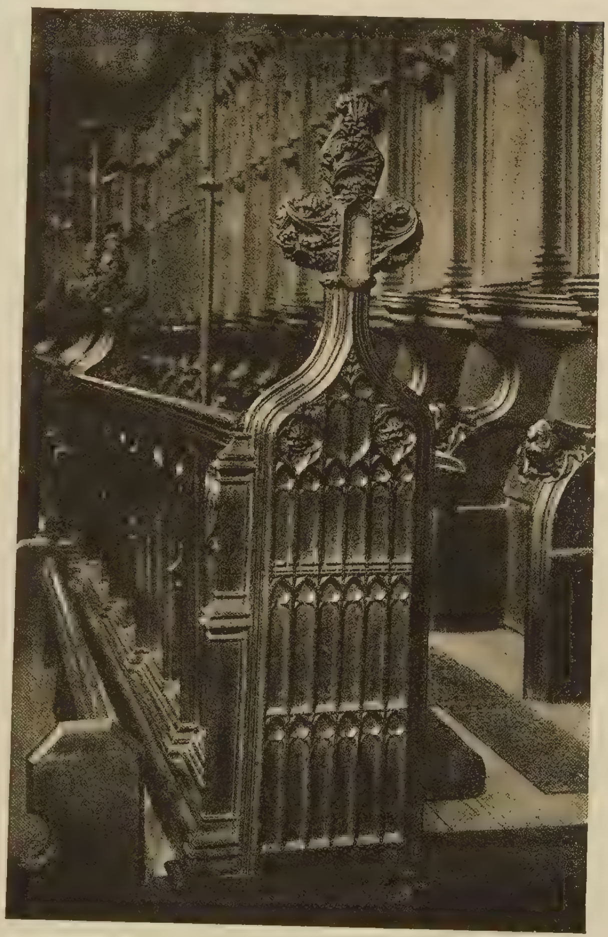


MANCHESTER CATHEDRAL

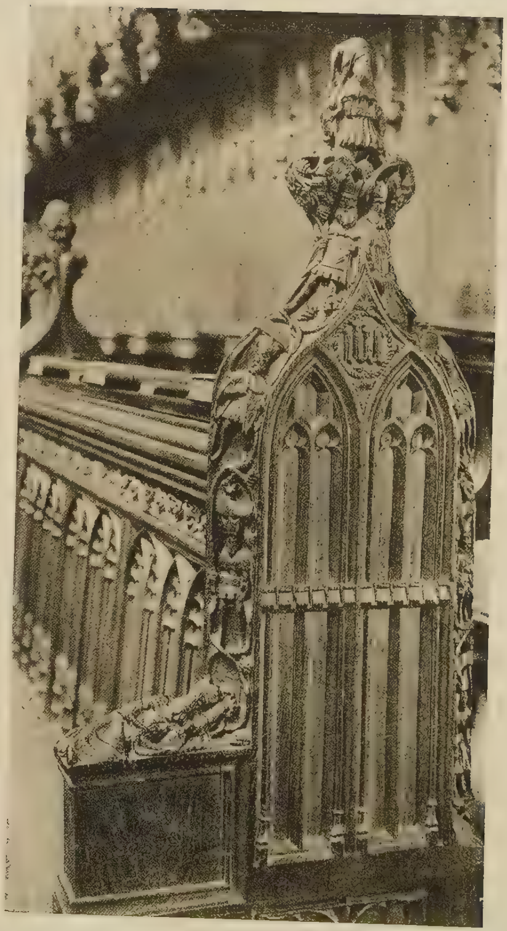
DESK ENDS—TRACERIED TREATMENTS



JARROW, DURHAM



LUDLOW, SALOP



CHESTER CATHEDRAL

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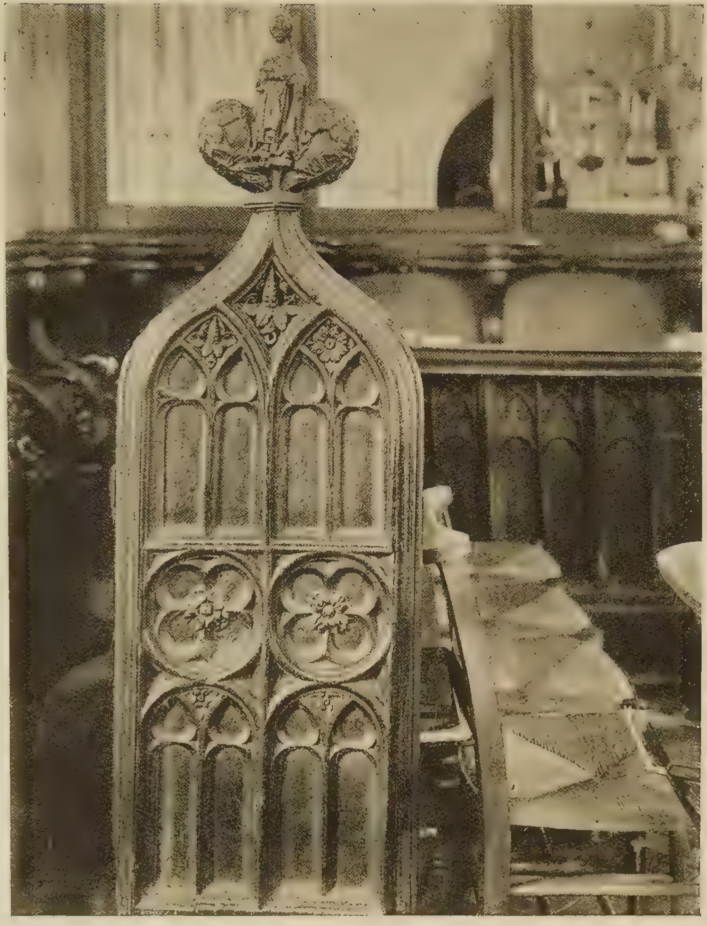
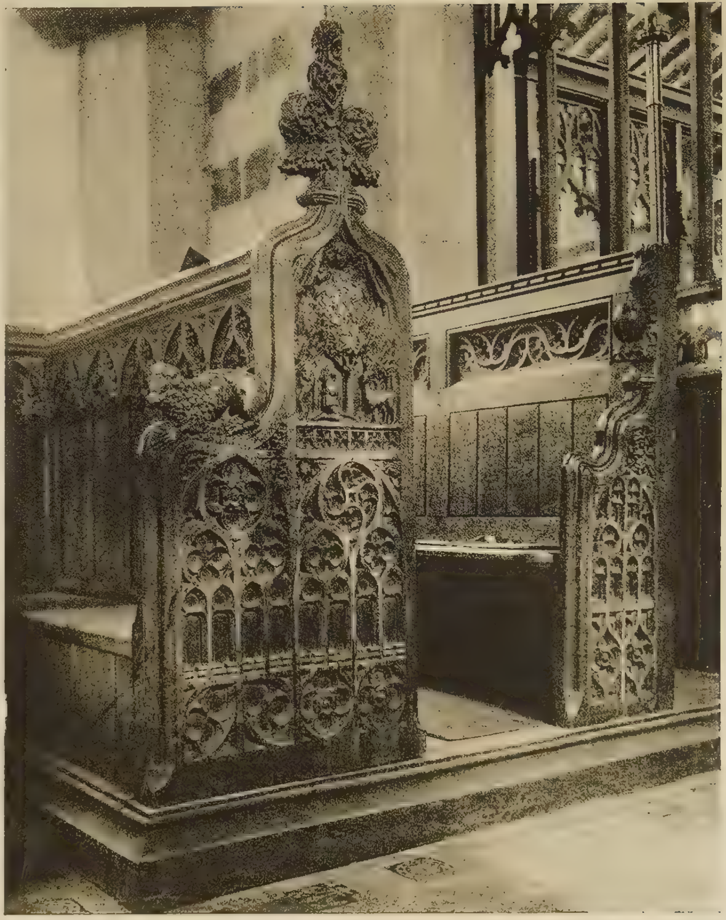
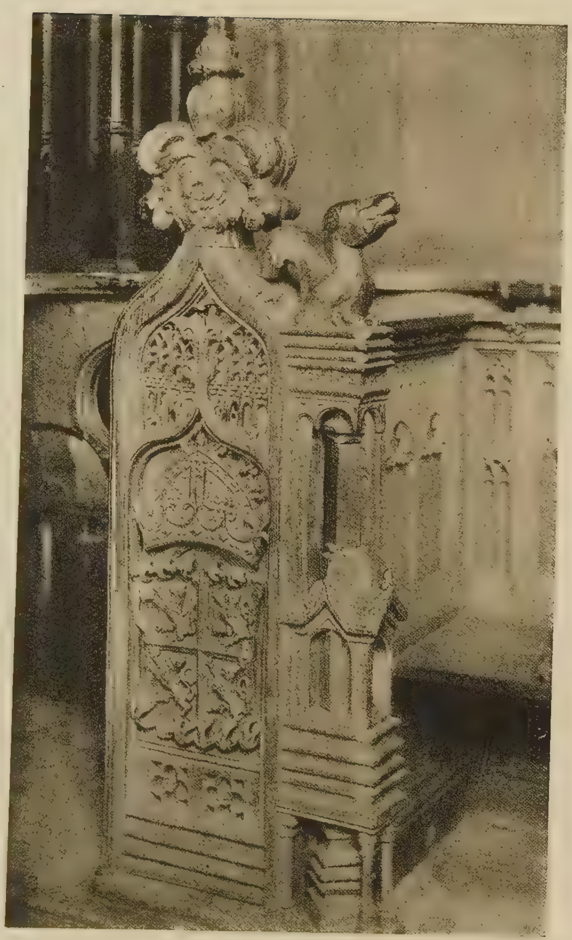


GRESFORD, DENBIGH

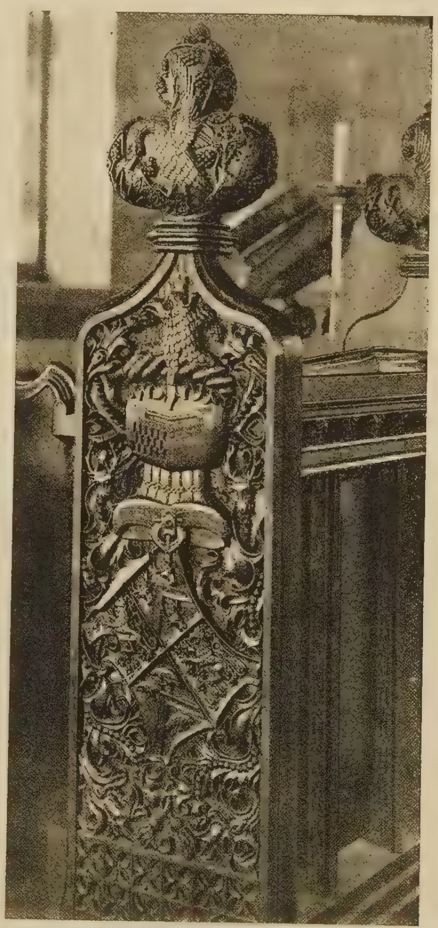


WINTHORPE, LINCS., WITH ELBOW FOR BOYS' SEATS

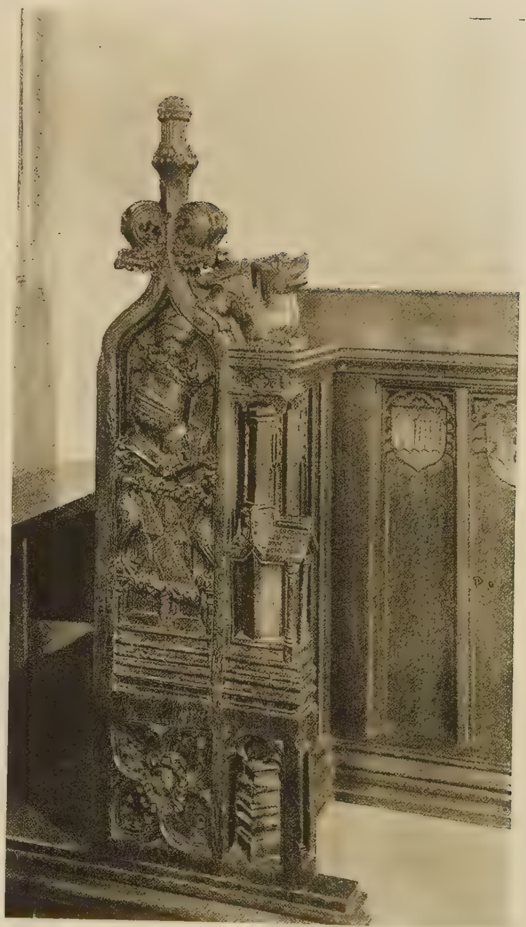
DESK ENDS—HERALDIC NORTH OF ENGLAND TYPES



UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, DURHAM

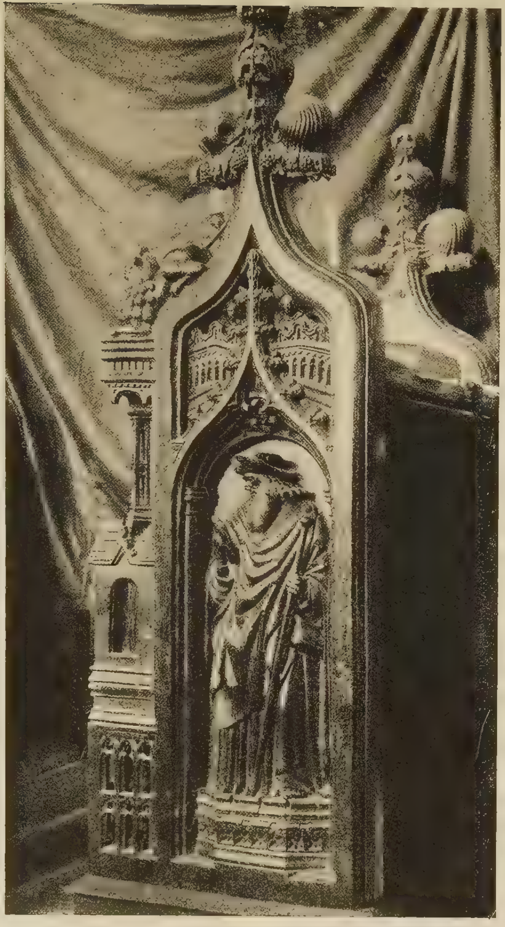


HAWARDEN, FLINTS.

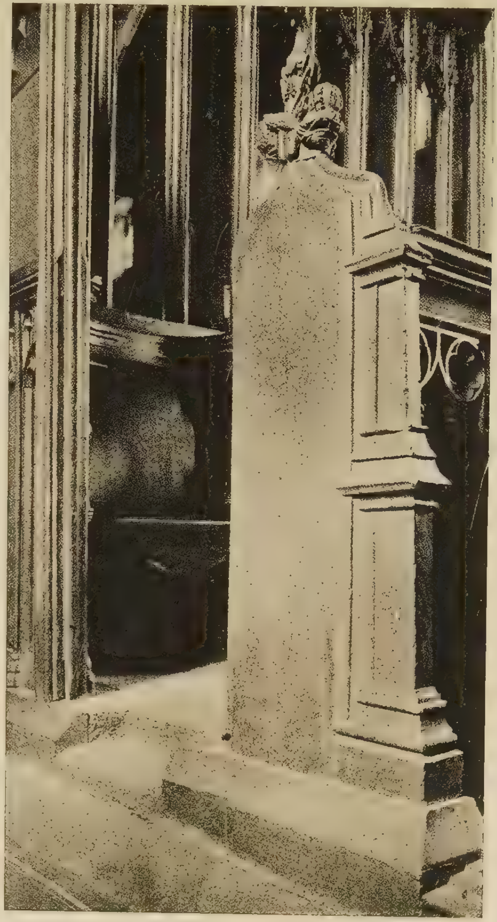


WENSLEY, YORKS.

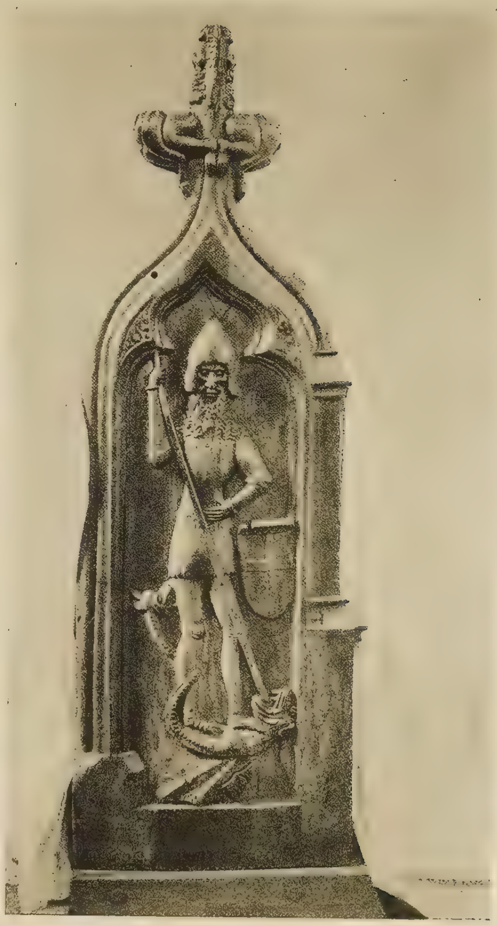
DESK ENDS—PLAIN AND WITH FIGURE SCULPTURE



BARKSTONE, LEICESTER

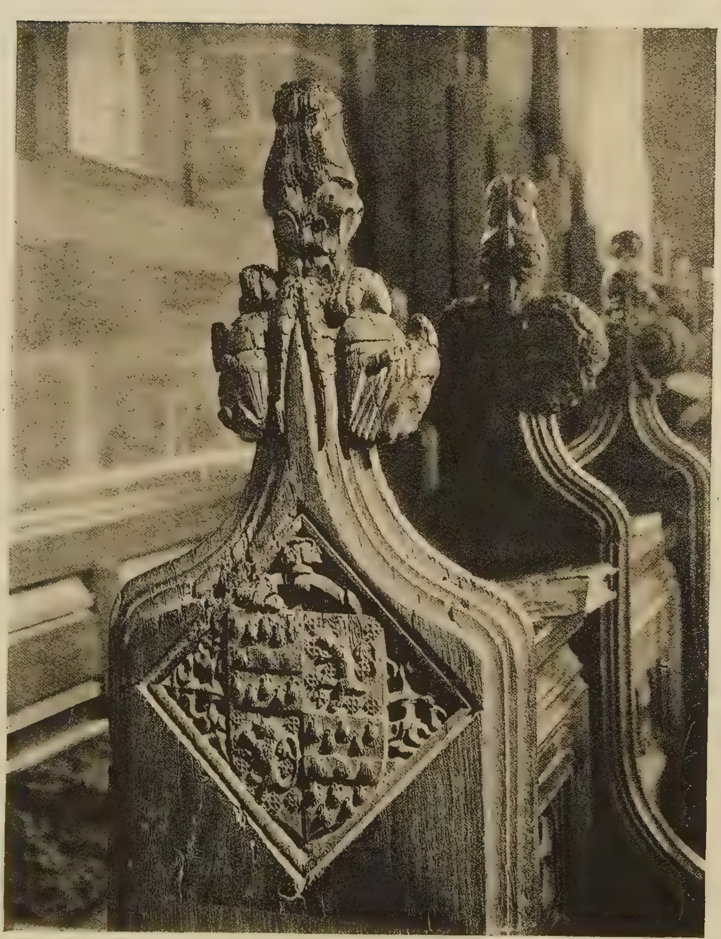


HIGHAM FERRERS, NORTHANTS

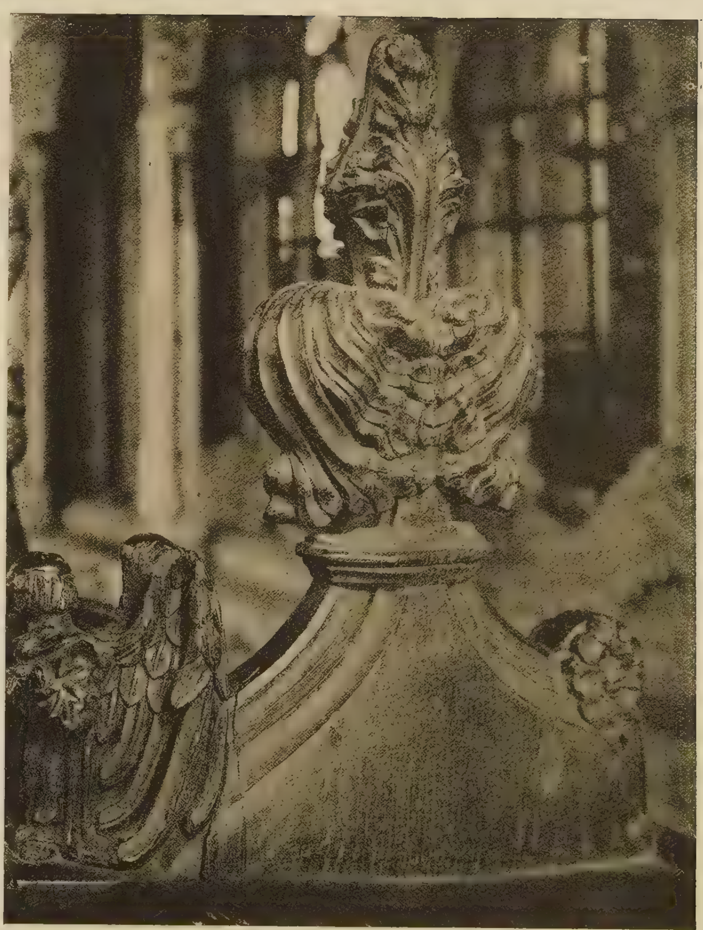


HULL HOLY TRINITY, YORKS.

DESK ENDS—SHAPED TOPS

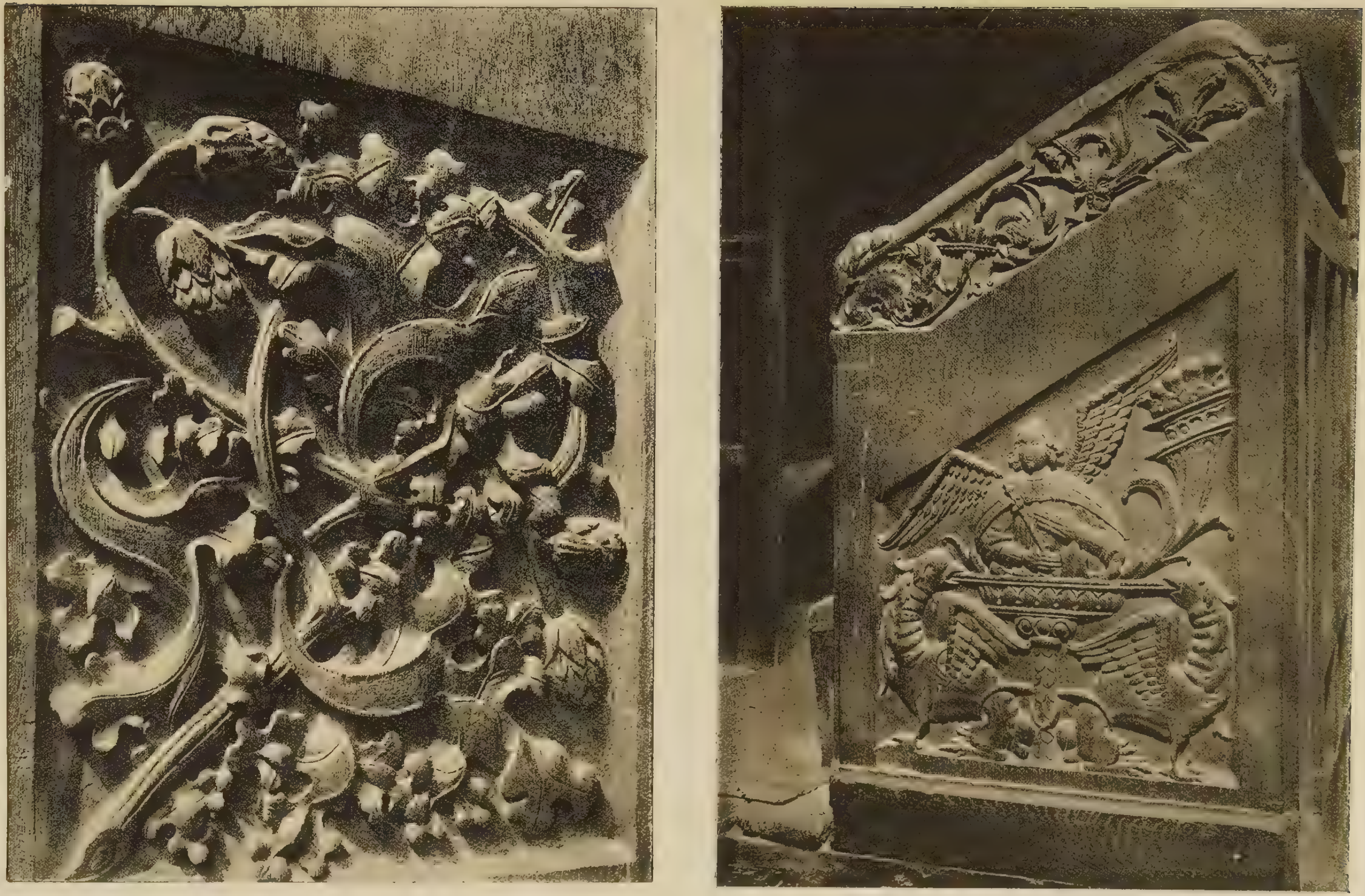


BRATOFT, LINCS.



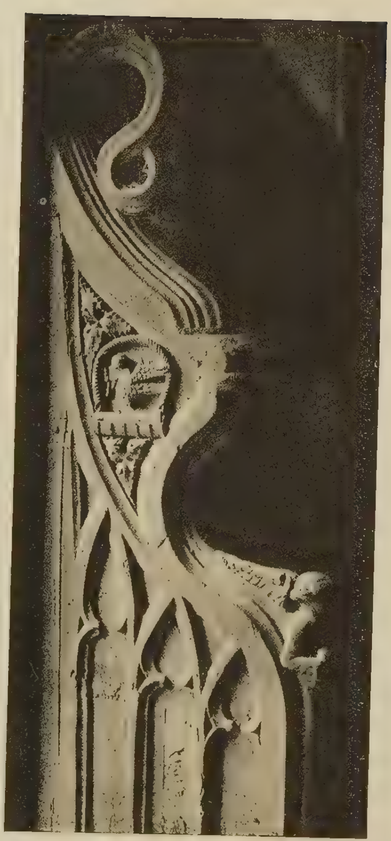
OXFORD CATHEDRAL

DESK ENDS—SLOPING TOPS

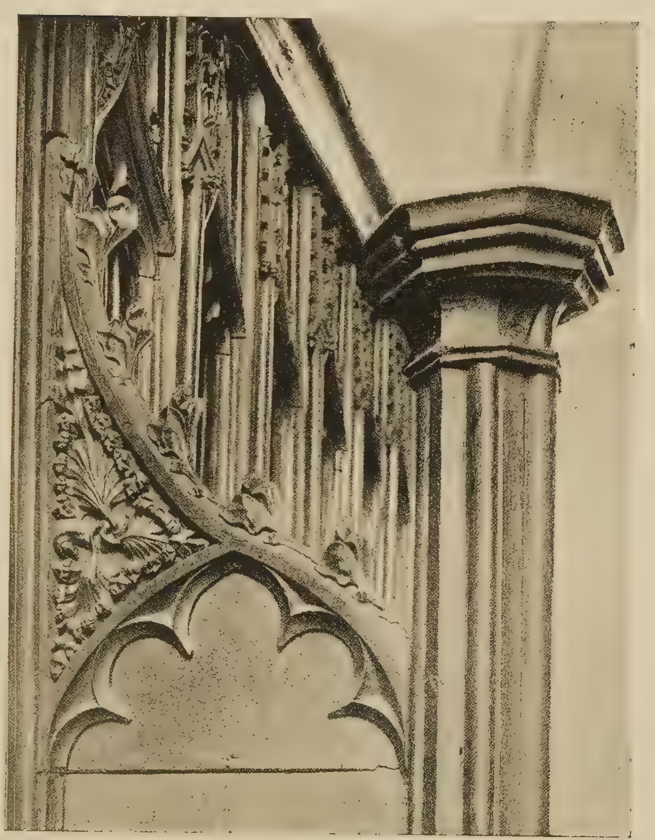


CHRISTCHURCH PRIORY, HANTS

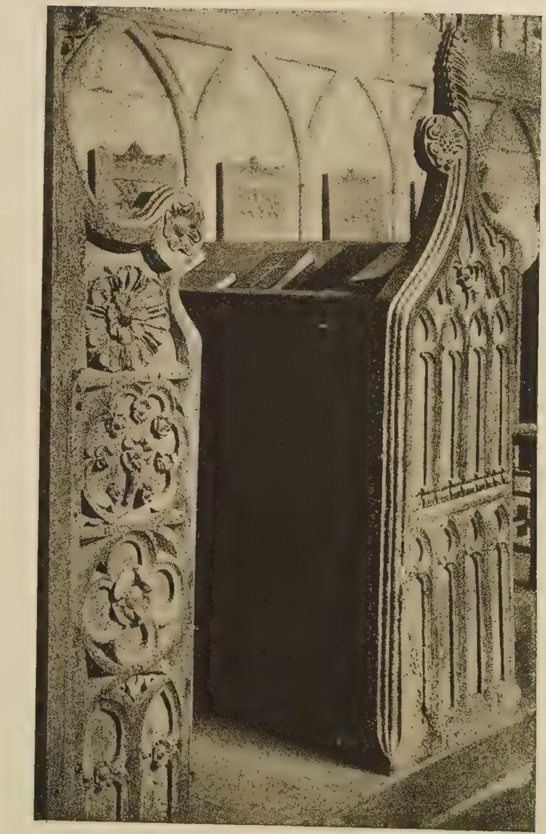
STANDARDS MASKING SEATS



HEMINGTON, NORTHANTS

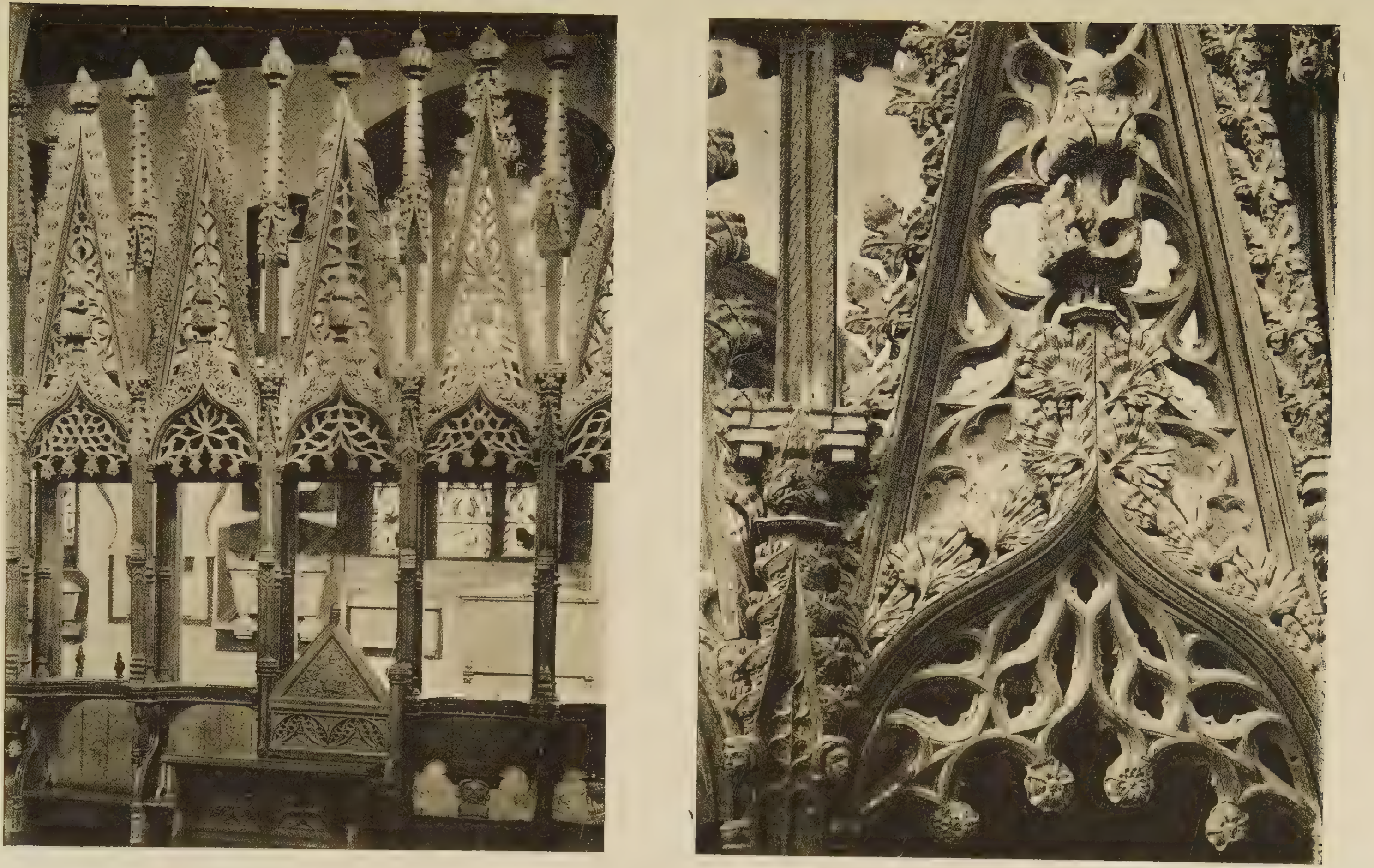


HIGHAM FERRERS, NORTHANTS

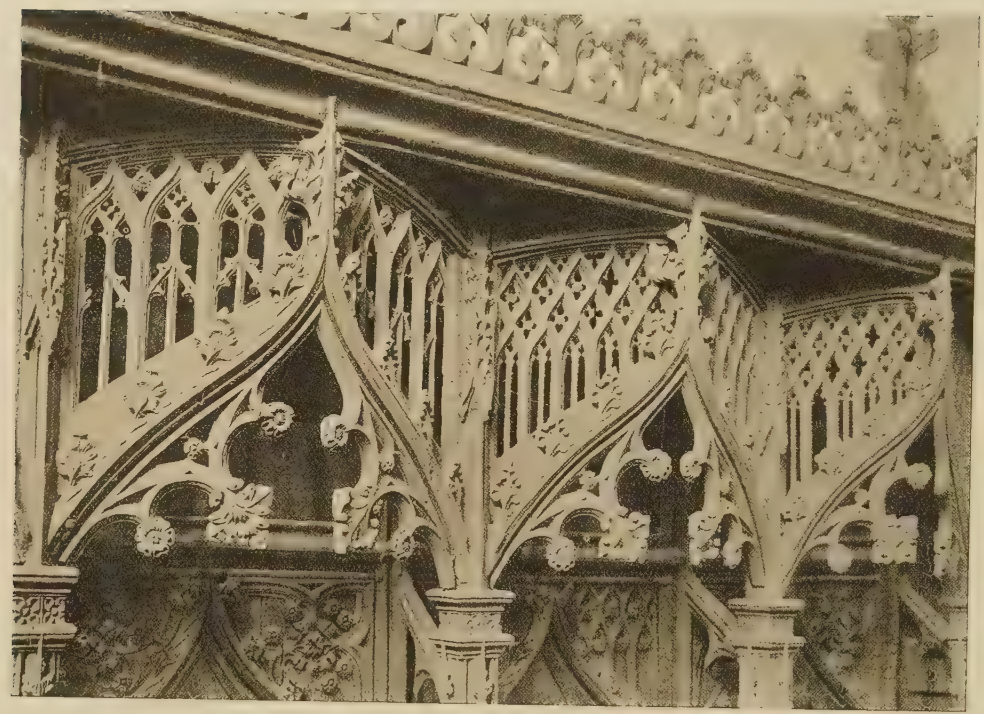


NORBURY, DERBY

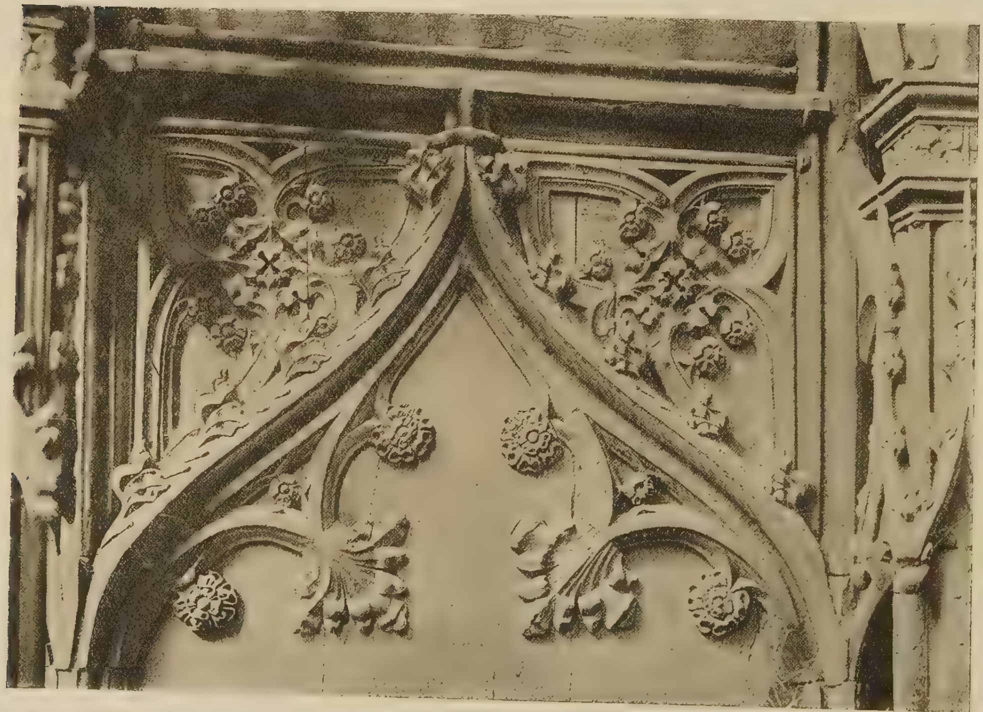
FOURTEENTH-CENTURY CANOPIED STALLS—ARCADED TYPE



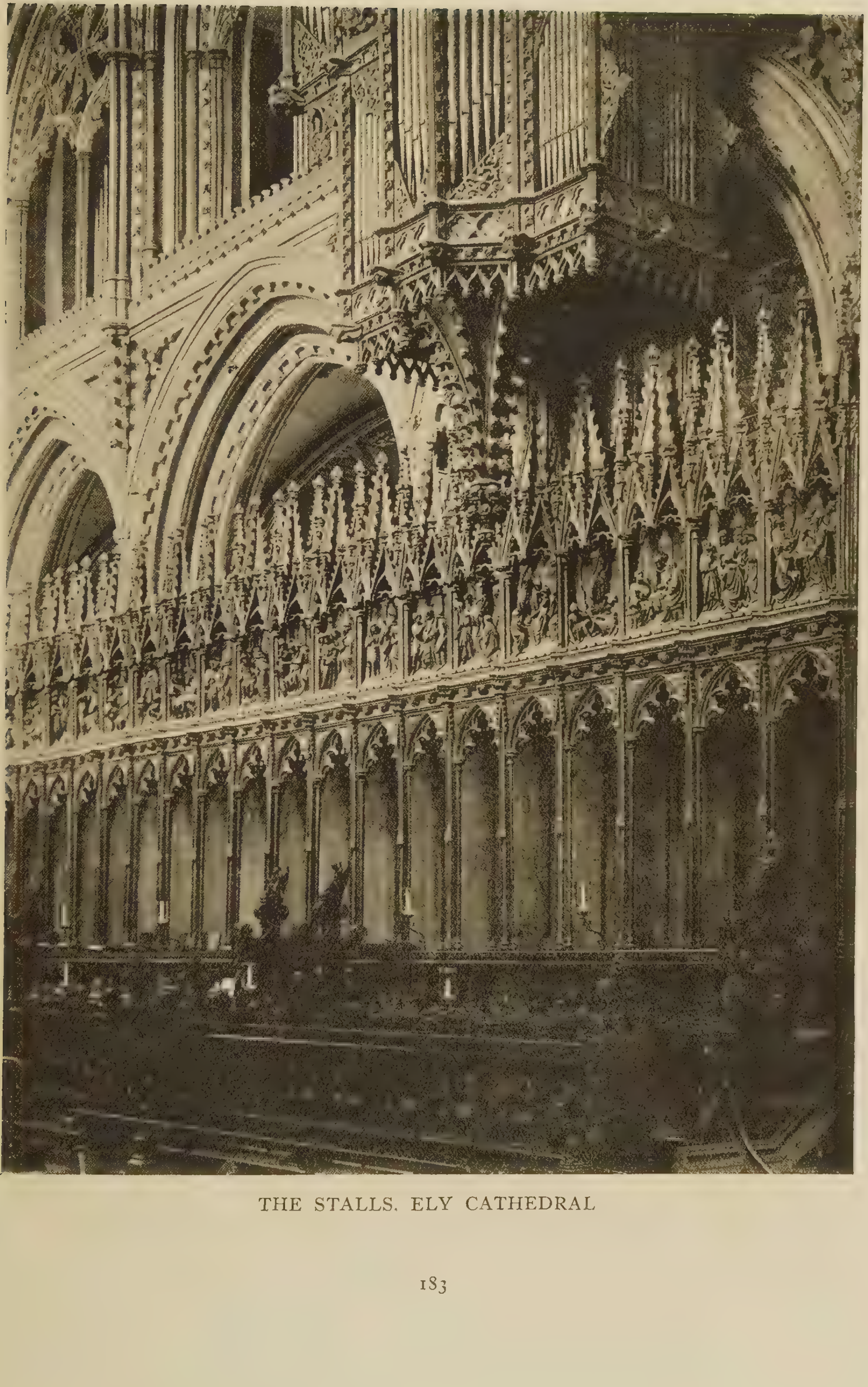
LANCASTER, LANCS., NOW IN PARISH CHURCH, SAID TO BE FROM COCKERSANDS



HEREFORD ALL SAINTS, LATE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

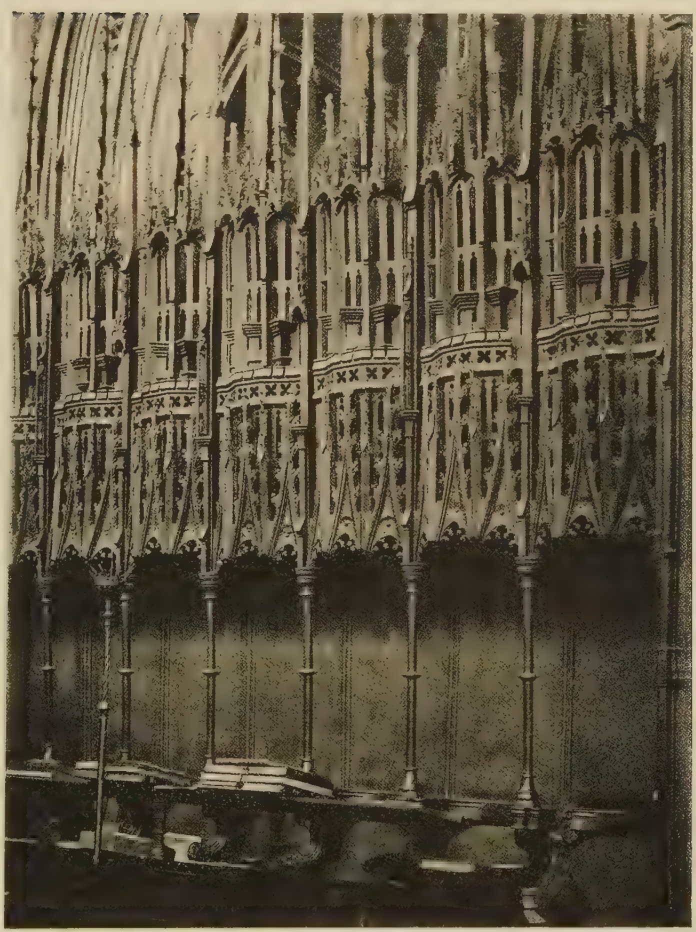


HEREFORD ALL SAINTS, DETAIL OF PANELLED BACKS

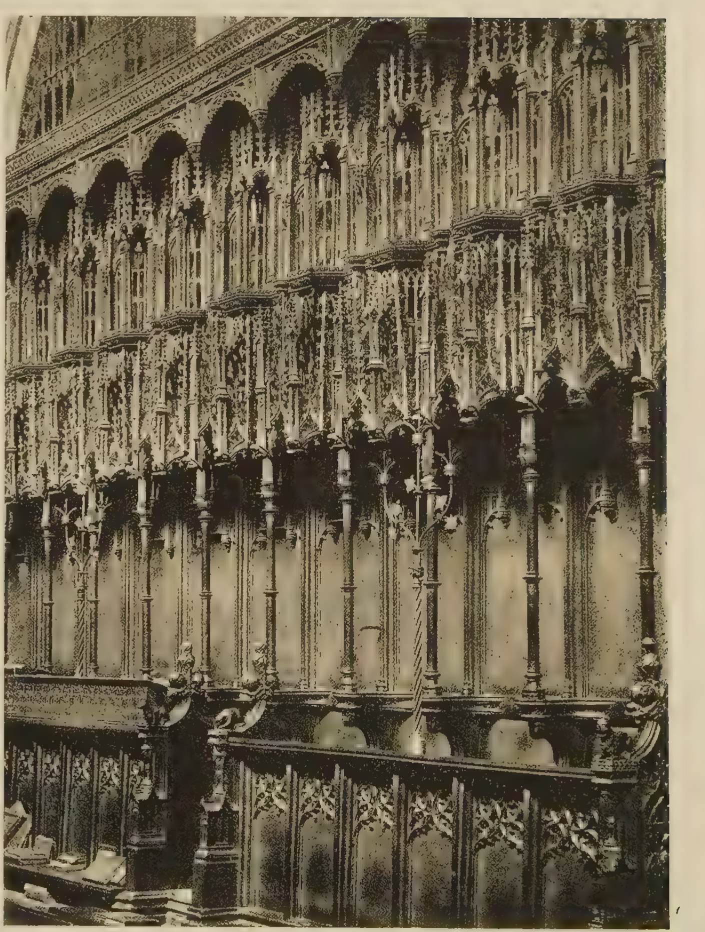


THE STALLS, ELY CATHEDRAL

TABERNACLED STALLS—FIFTEENTH AND SIXTEENTH CENTURY

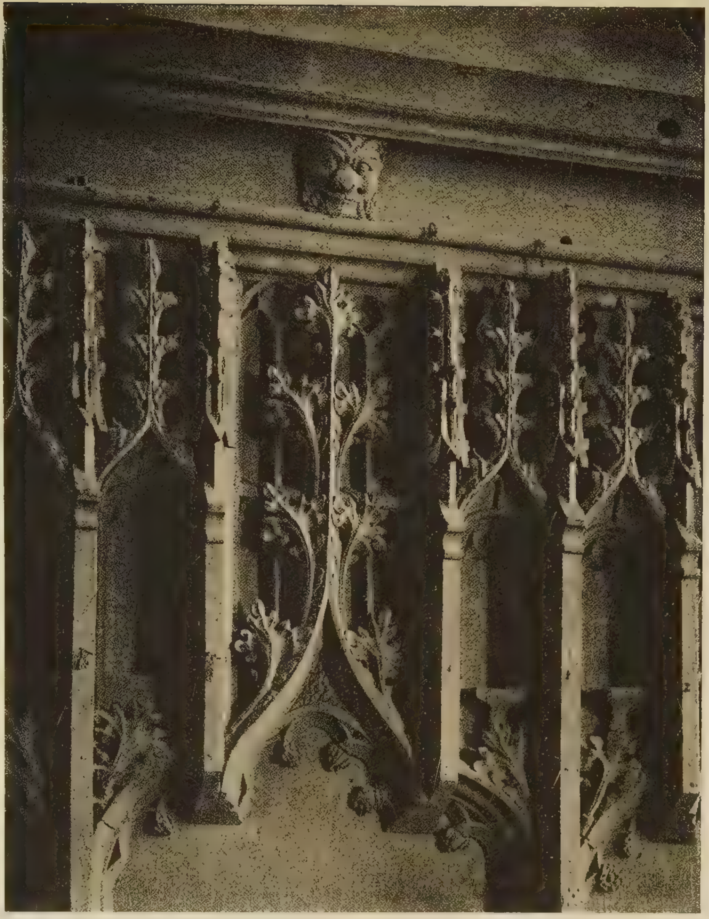


CARLISLE CATHEDRAL, EARLY FIFTEENTH CENTURY

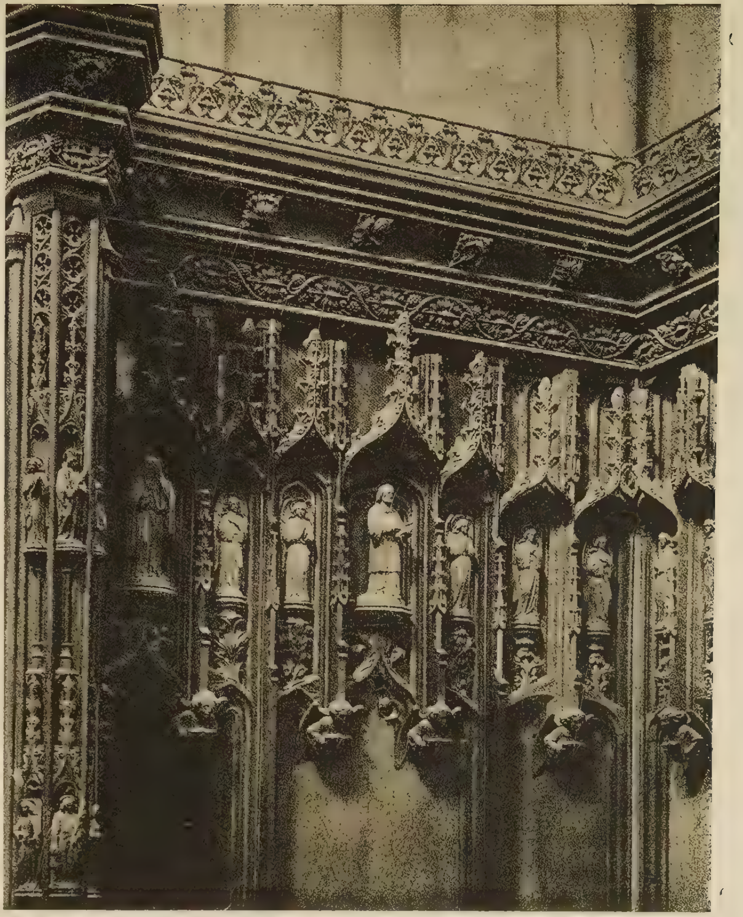


MANCHESTER CATHEDRAL, EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY

PANELLED STALL BACKS

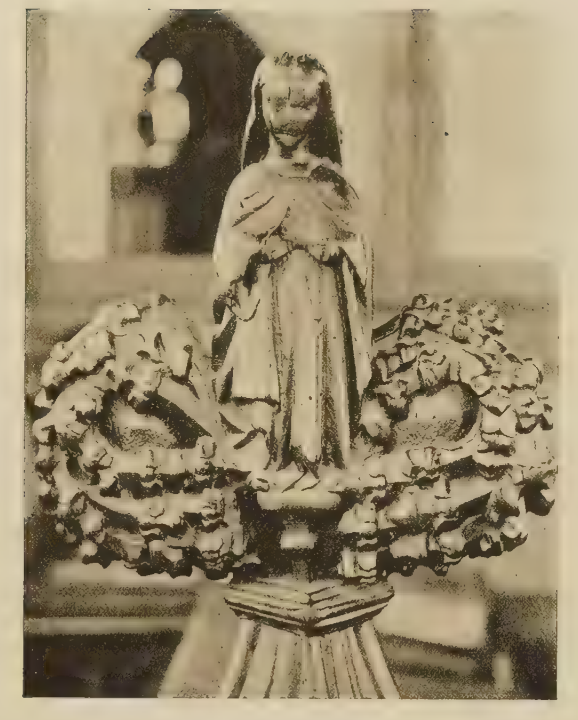


MONTGOMERY

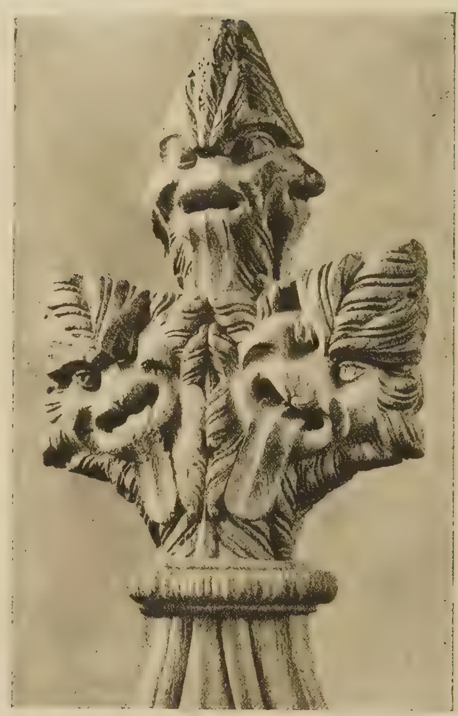


LUDLOW, SALOP

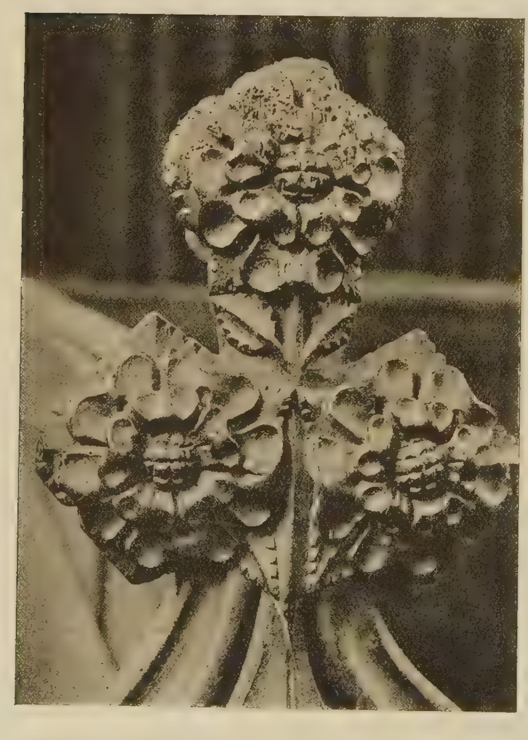
POUPÉE HEADS



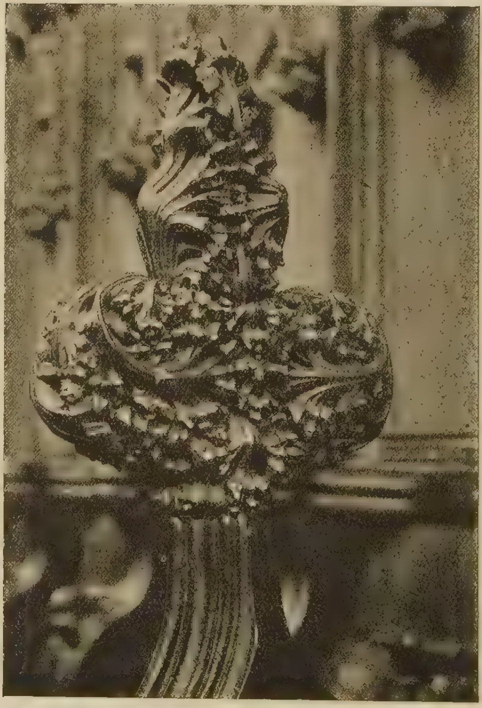
GRESFORD, DENBIGH



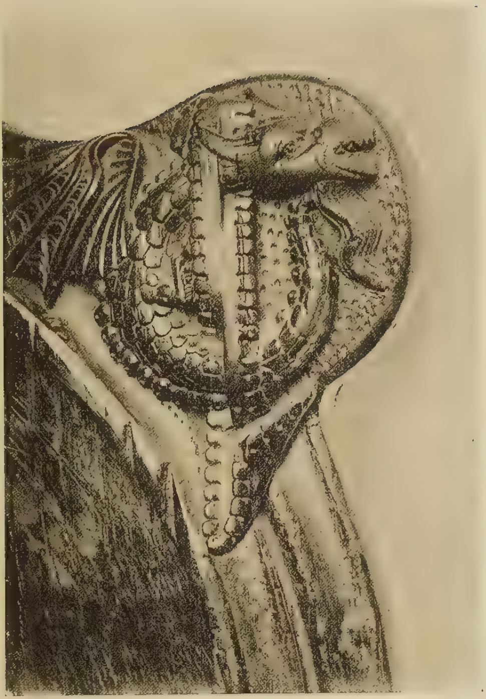
RATTLESDEN, SUFFOLK



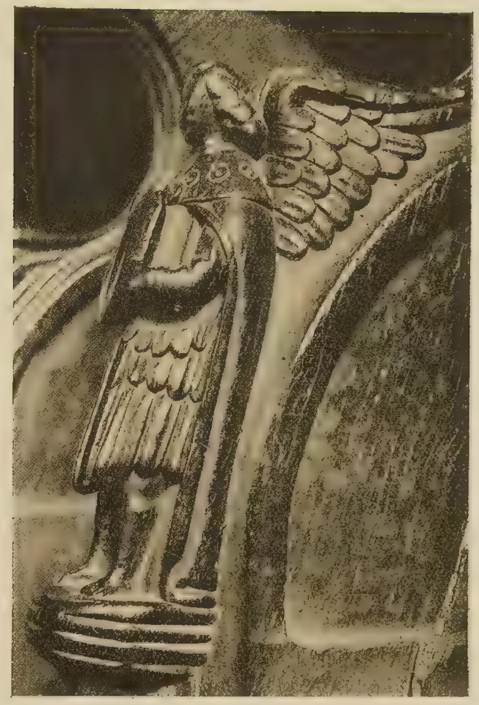
ASTBURY, CHESHIRE



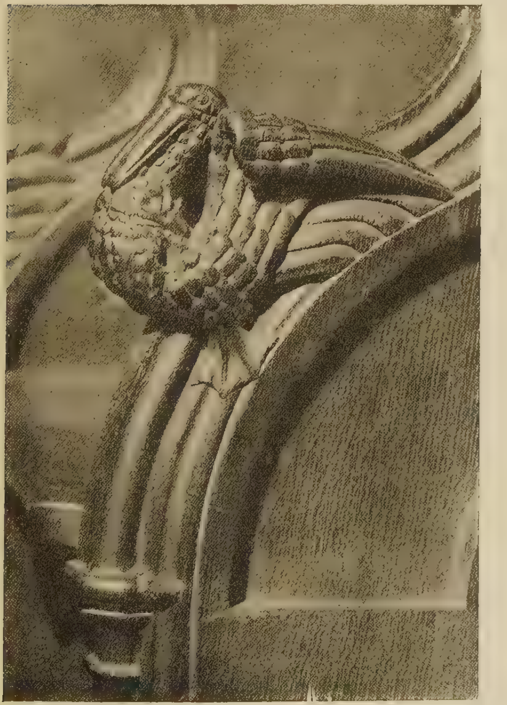
LUDLOW, SALOP



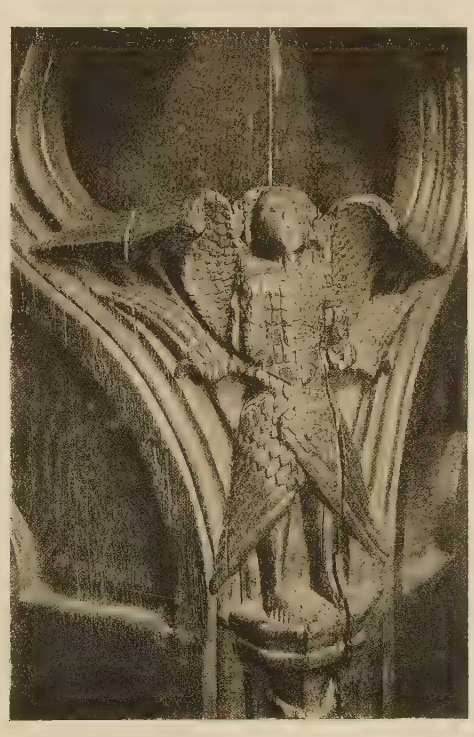
CARTMEL, LANCS.



TONG, SALOP

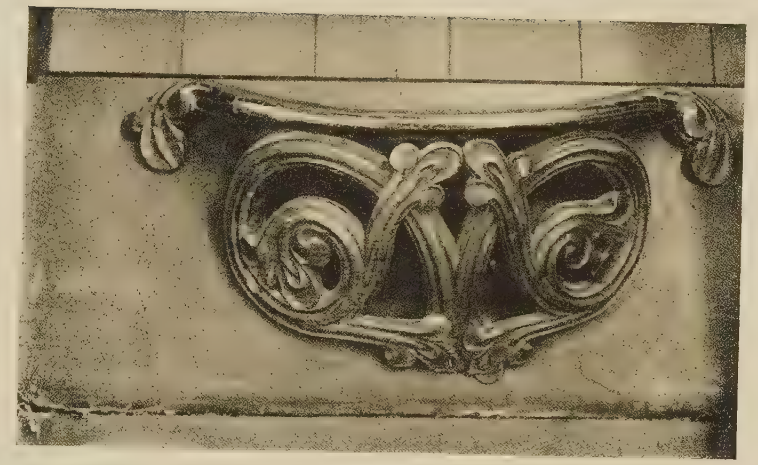


CHESTER CATHEDRAL

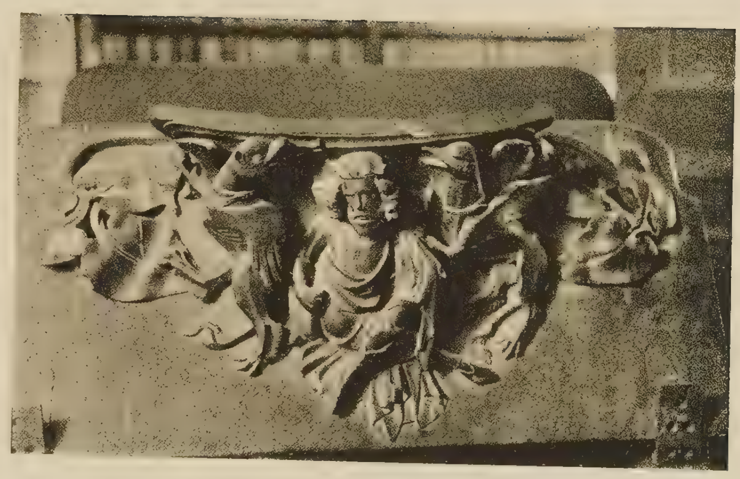


CHESTER CATHEDRAL

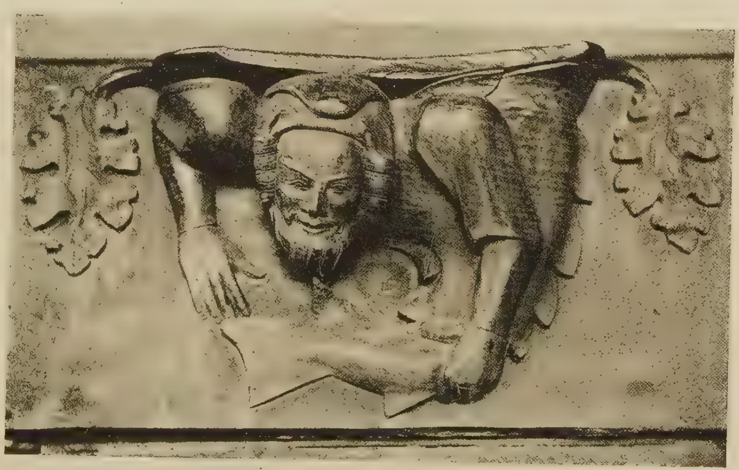
MISERICORDS



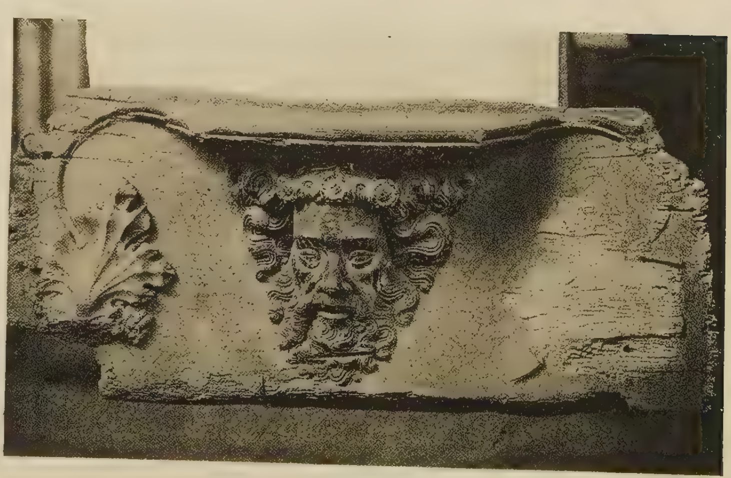
HEMINGBOROUGH, YORKS., THIRTEENTH CENTURY



WELLS CATHEDRAL, KING ALEXANDER

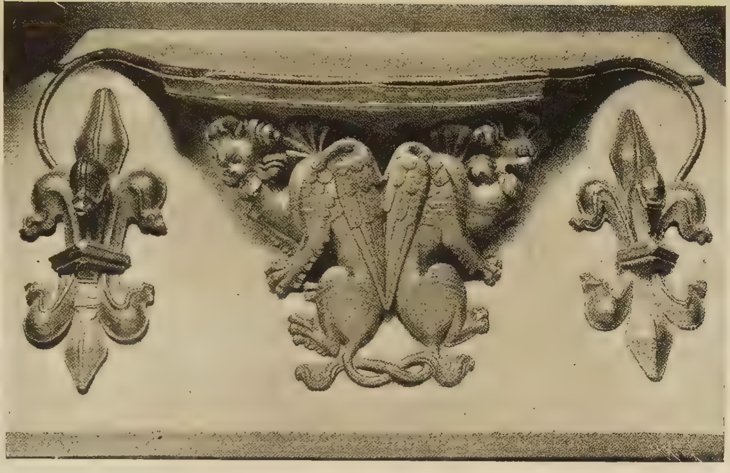


CHICHESTER, ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL

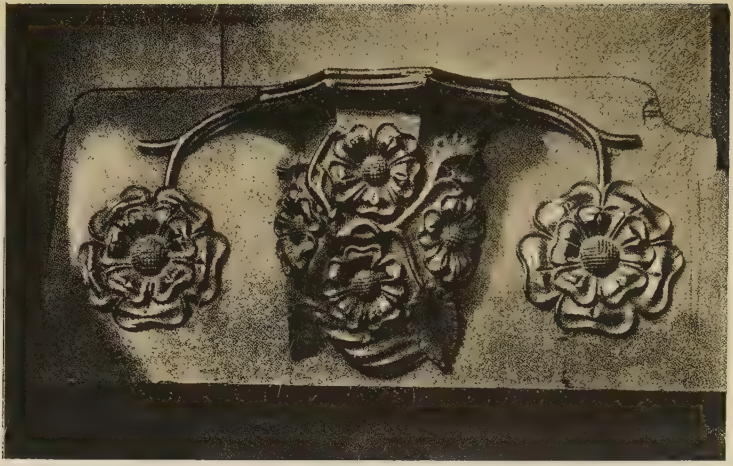


LOVERSALL, YORKS., EARLY FIFTEENTH CENTURY

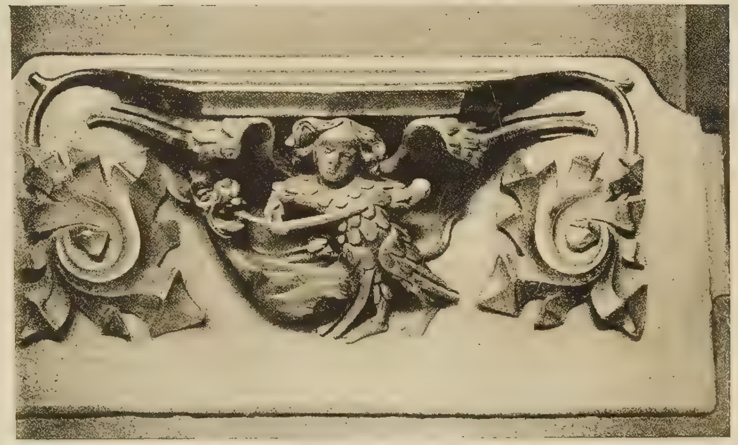
MISERICORDS



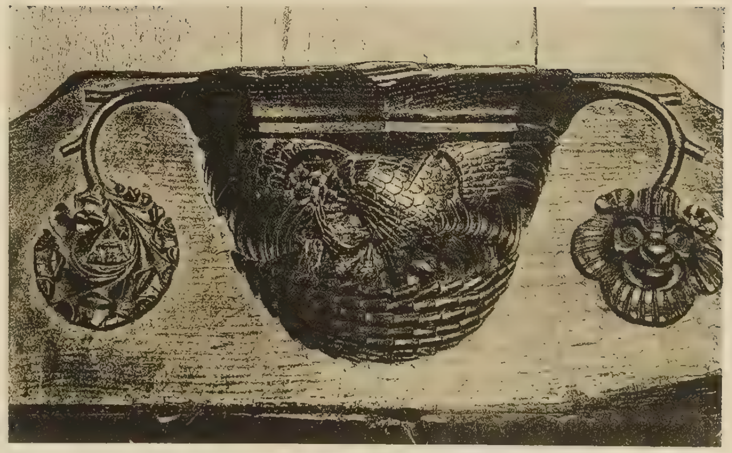
CHESTER CATHEDRAL



LUDLOW, SALOP

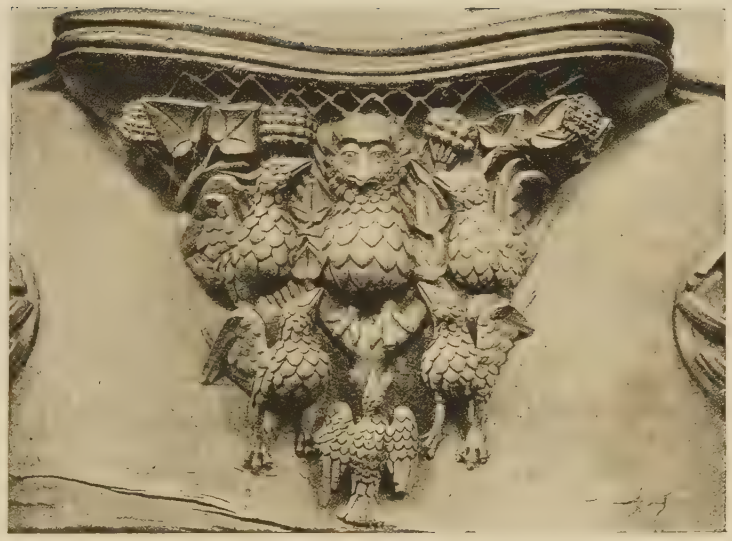


CARLISLE CATHEDRAL, ST MICHAEL AND THE DRAGON

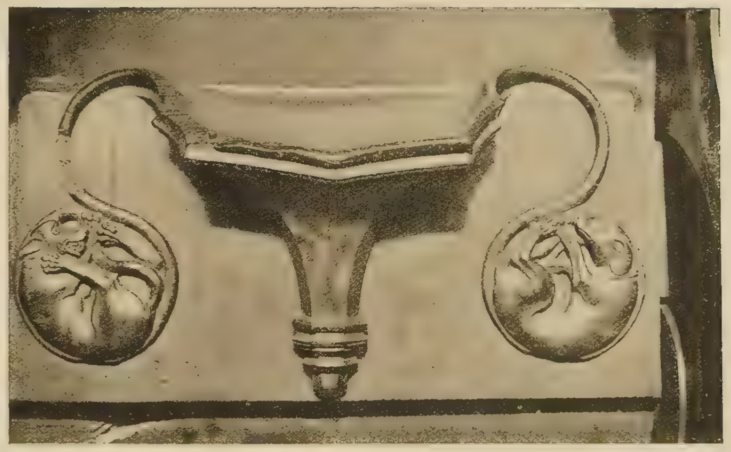


CARTMEL PRIORY, LANCS., THE PELICAN

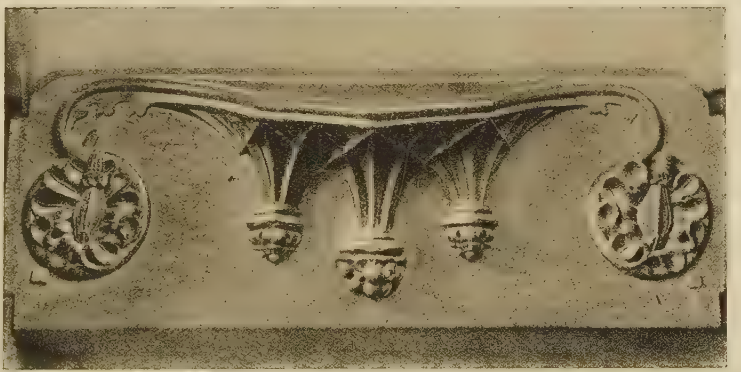
MISERICORDS



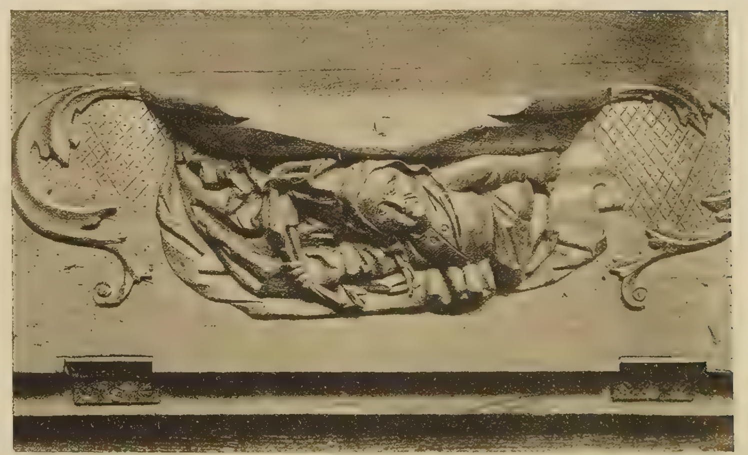
NORWICH CATHEDRAL, OWL AND BIRDS



SOUTHWOLD, SUFFOLK, ARCHITECTURAL TREATMENT



NORTH MARSTON, BUCKS., LIERNE VAULTING



CHRISTCHURCH PRIORY, RENAISSANCE

BISHOPS' THRONES

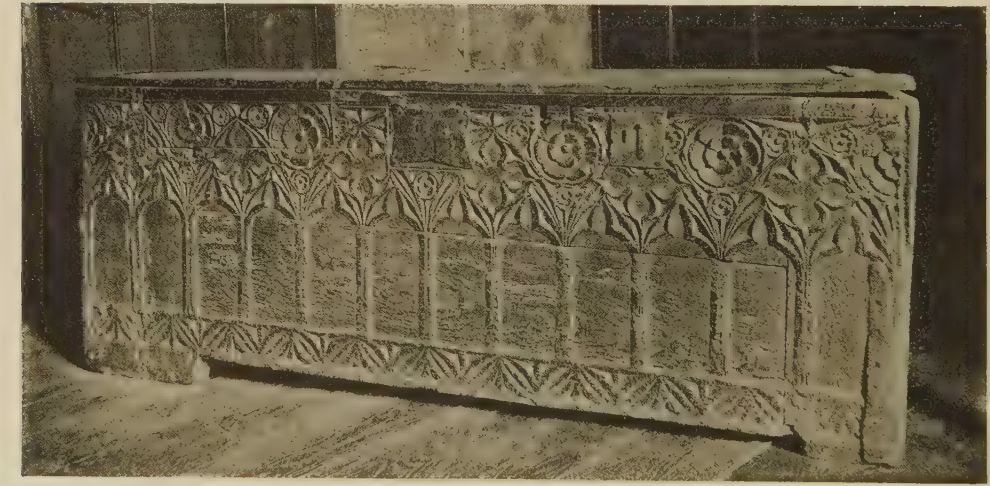
Mediæval bishops' thrones are naturally very rare. Their number was always limited, and though they survived the changes of the Reformation, it was only to meet with destruction as an outward symbol of the hated episcopate by the fanatics of the rebellion. It is indeed a matter for thankfulness that three grand examples of wood are left for our admiration at Exeter, Hereford, and St David's, besides a few in stone.

In the early Christian churches of cathedral rank the seat of the bishop was behind the altar, in the centre of the western apse. When the change of plan, discussed in the section dealing with stalls, came about, the throne could no longer occupy the same position with regard to the altar, as it would have blocked the main entrance to the quire, namely, that in the screen. An entire break with tradition took place, and the new position chosen for the bishop's throne was on the south side, just east of the stalls. Exceptions to this rule may be noted at Norwich, where the twelfth-century seat of the bishop was behind the altar, facing west, and at Ely, where the bishop has always occupied the seat usually assigned to the dean, on the south side of the quire entrance.

When the bishop was present in quire he was generally accompanied by two chaplains, who stood or sat on either side of him. Consequently it was necessary to provide three stalls with a long desk in front. These were canopied with a gorgeous spire of tabernacle work, a glorified version of those over the stalls.

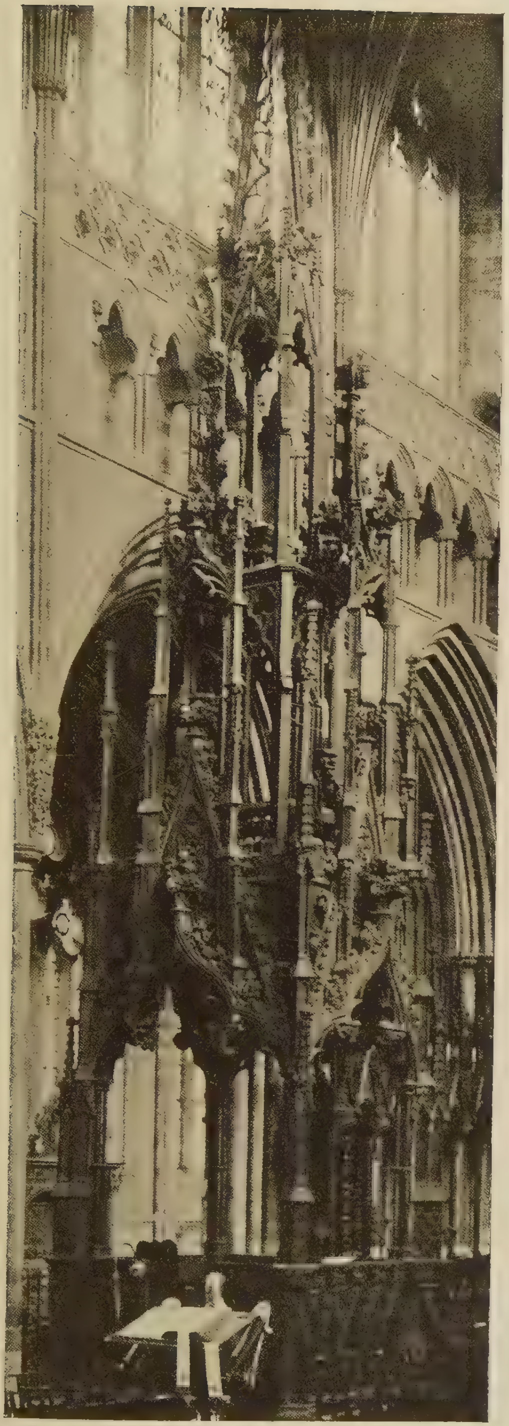
At Exeter (193-94-95) the bishop's throne, which is the earliest and finest in existence, has a canopy approximately square on plan, supported on four posts, covering both the seats and the desk. The posts are disguised as pinnacled buttresses, and end in tall pinnacles. They are connected with bowing ogee arches of trefoiled outline with tall gables behind them, all magnificently crocketted. The second stage also has four posts, but they are much closer together, and form a square lantern with traceried windows, on each face of which an open tabernacle, triangular on plan, with bowing ogee arches and a slender spire, is attached. The third stage consists of a similar tabernacle, square on plan, culminating in a lofty spire of open tracery which nearly touches the vault. The proportions are rather heavy, but the effect is rich and impressive, while the details of the carving, of infinite variety and cut with masterly skill, are finer than anything else of the period. The foliage is of the bulbous character usual at its date, 1312; it is wonderfully pierced and undercut (195).

The bishop's throne at St David's (193) must have been inspired by that at Exeter, but it is of the fifteenth century, and is rather different in plan. Instead of a single canopy covering everything, each seat has a canopy of its own, those of the chaplains' stalls being lower and less elaborate than that of the bishop. The central canopy is supported on four legs, like that at Exeter, but it changes to an octagon in the second stage. From the angle pinnacles flying buttresses rise to a two-storied square tabernacle, terminating in a tall spire. The chaplains' canopies are half hexagon on plan, and have triangular spires. Though the carving is very simple, it has something of the wonderful skill in modelling which is found at Exeter, and is cleanly and beautifully cut. The whole structure, though less open than Exeter, has a lighter and more graceful effect, due to its fine proportions.

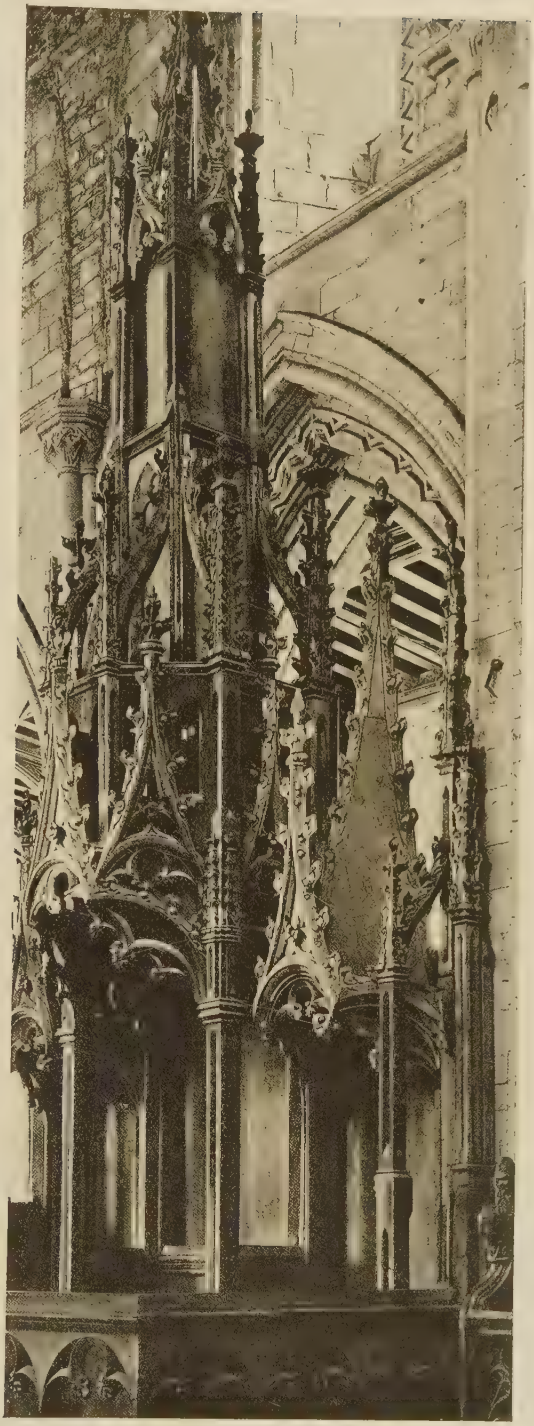


MUNSLOW, SALOP, OAK CHEST

BISHOPS' THRONES

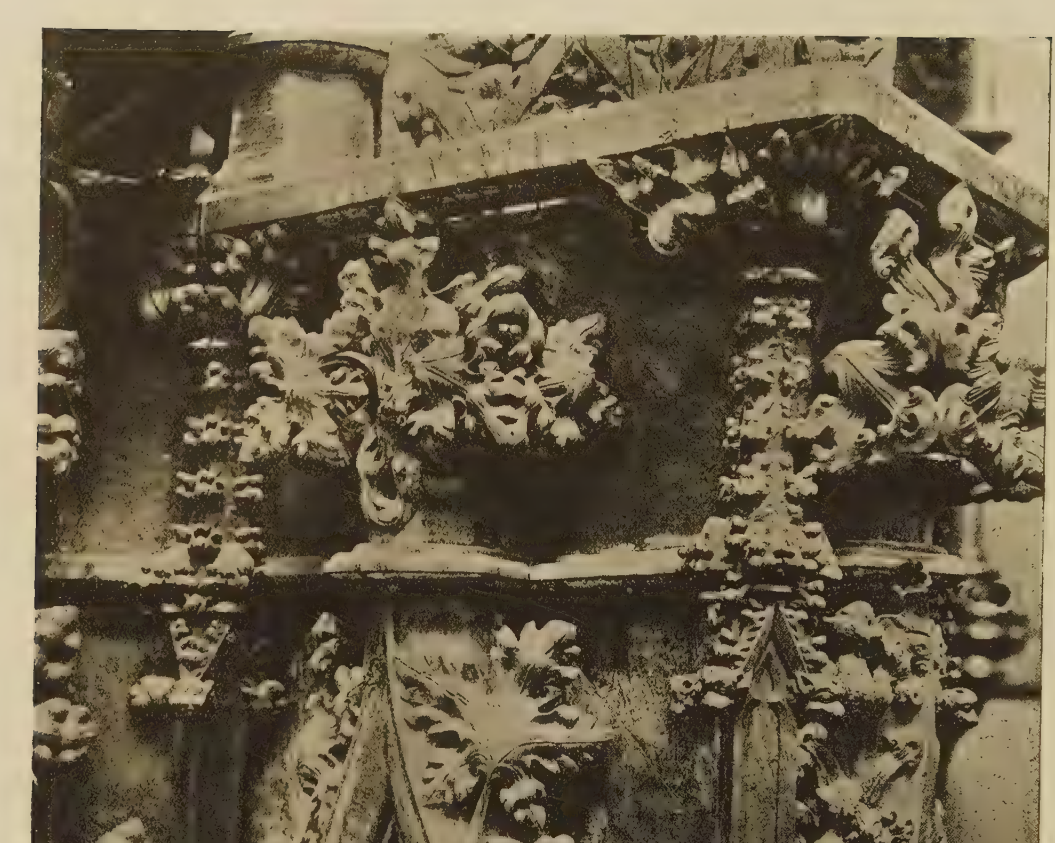


EXETER CATHEDRAL



ST DAVID'S CATHEDRAL

DETAIL OF BISHOP'S THRONE



EXETER, DETAIL OF CROCKETS

DETAILS OF EXETER THRONES

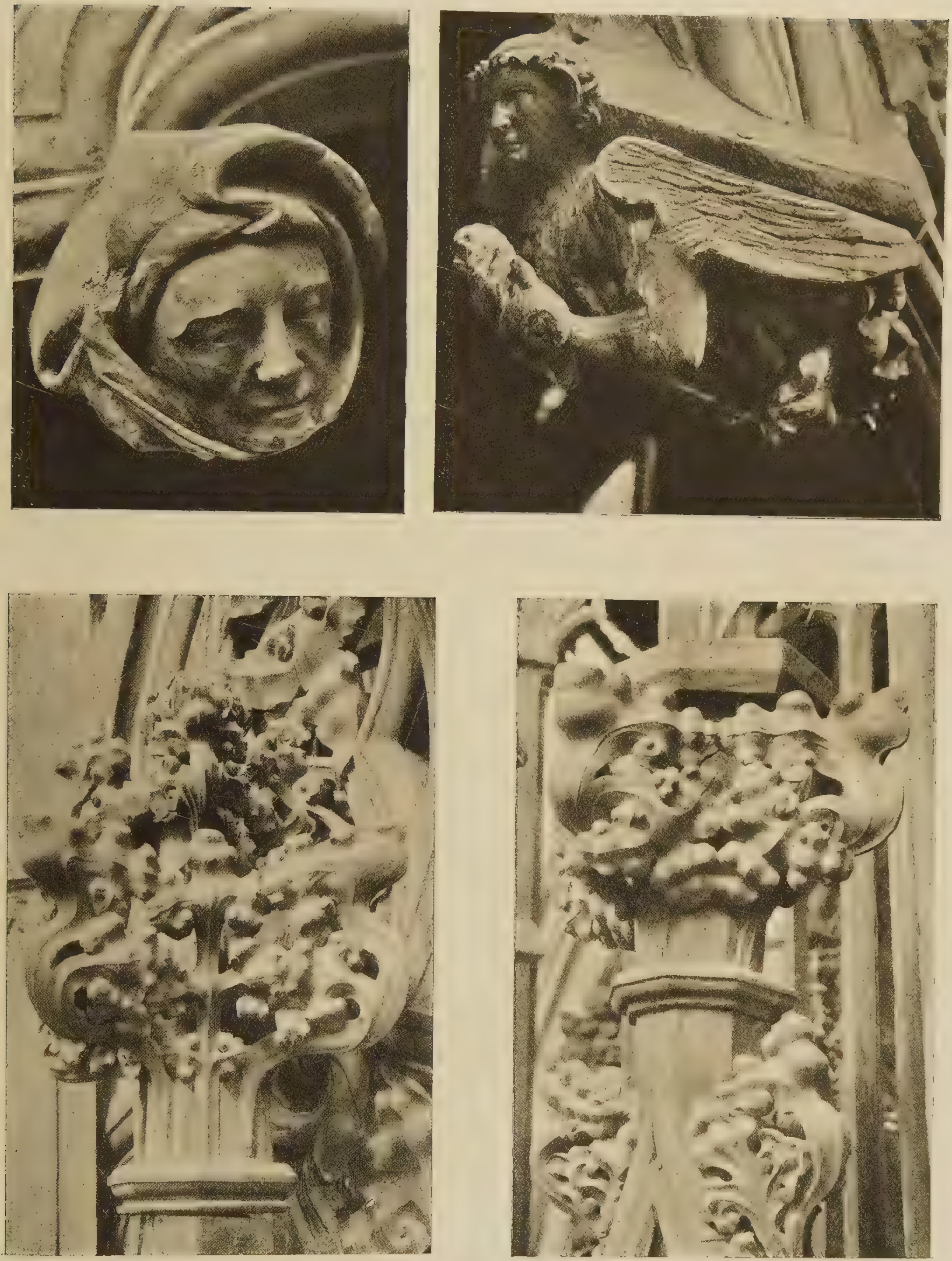
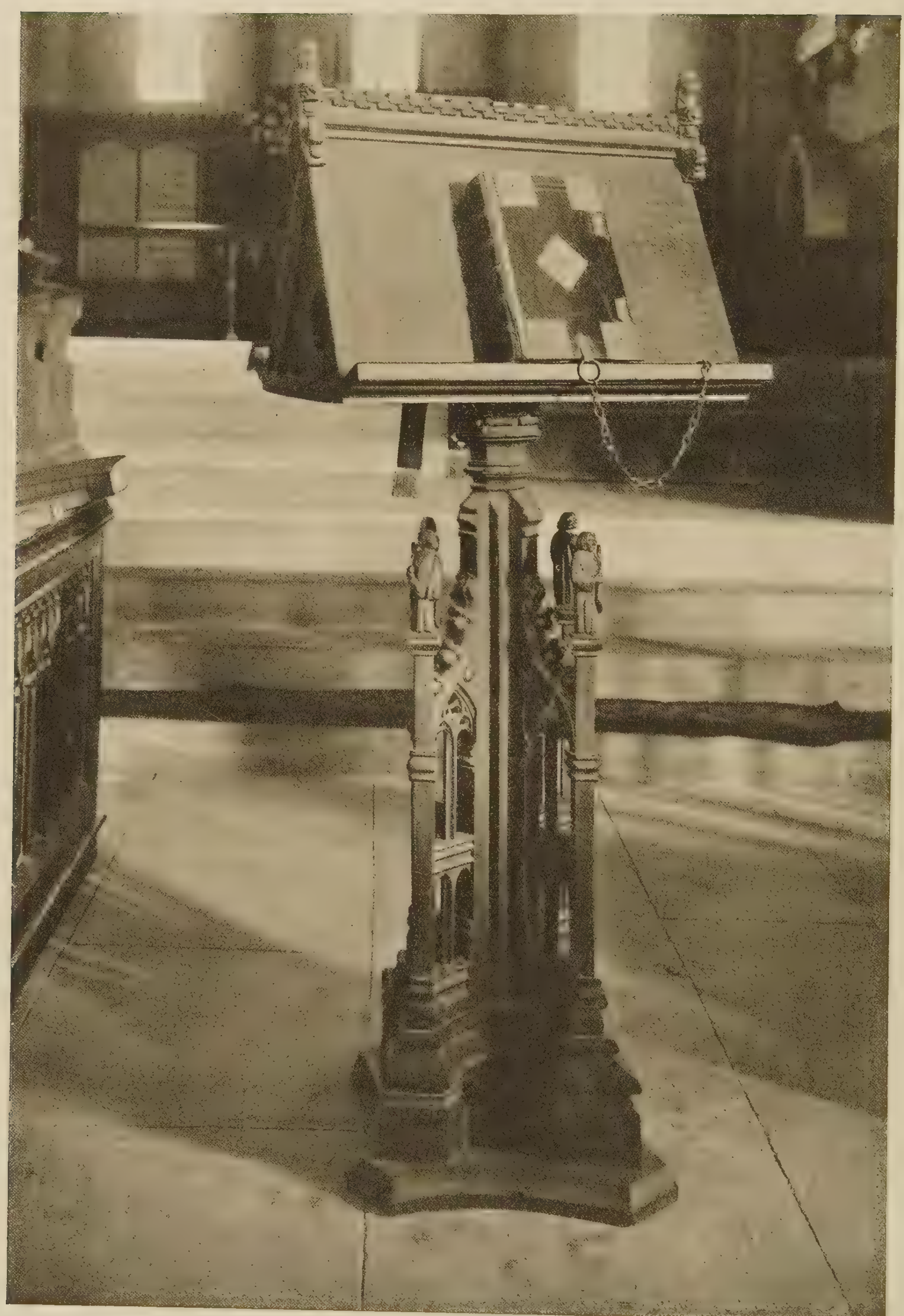


FIGURE TERMINALS AND FINIALS



BURY, HUNTS., EARLY FIFTEENTH CENTURY

LECTERNS

In the greater churches there were at least two lecterns. One, the gospel lectern, stood in the sanctuary, to the north and rather in front of the altar. It was from this that the deacon, facing north, attended by the sub-deacon, taperers, and thurifer, read the gospel at high mass on lesser days. A brass eagle is plainly shown in this position in the well-known drawing of the high altar of Westminster abbey church, which forms part of the Islip Roll, and in the "Rites of Durham" it is recorded that a lectern of brass stood at the north end of the high altar, having a gilt pelican on the top, "whereon did lie the book that they did sing the Epistle and Gospel." On the greater festivals the gospel appears from the Consuetudinaries to have been read from the pulpitum, where a similar lectern must have been provided.

The other necessary lectern was the quire lectern, standing in the middle of the space between the stalls. It supported the books from which the two conductors or rulers of the quire sang at the divine office and at mass.

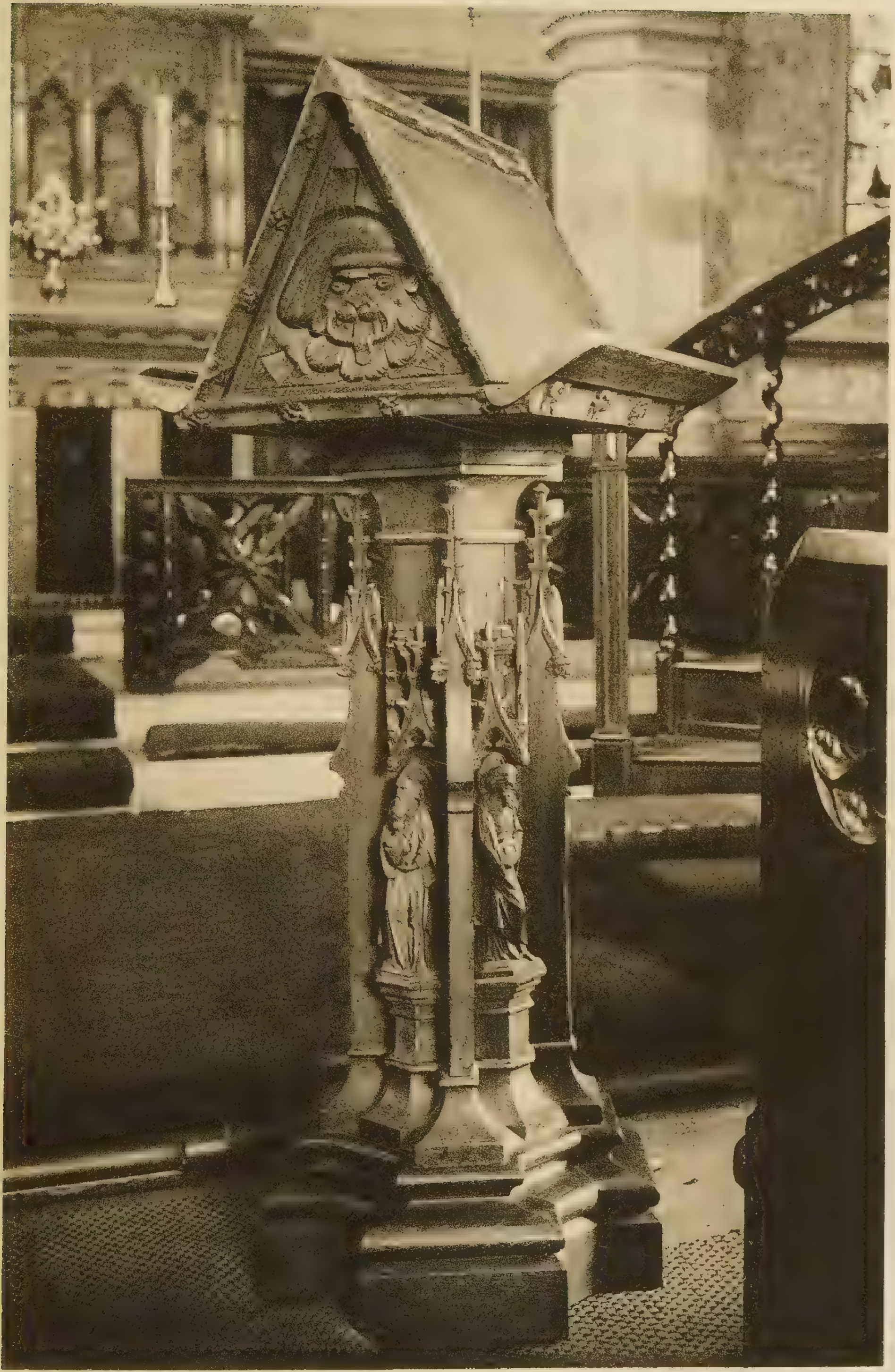
Besides these there were other lecterns for the singers in the rood-loft or pulpitum, and little desks were used on the altars for the missal at low masses. It is also probable that they were occasionally used to support chained books for the use of the parishioners, in the manner common in post-Reformation days.

Mediæval documents, service books, churchwardens' accounts, and inventories clearly show that similar customs prevailed in the parish churches, which copied the cathedral uses as closely as their resources would allow. Thus at Thame, Oxon., in 1447, there were "2 lecternes standyng in ye chauncel." In 1448 there was also a "lettryne for a mass-book," probably a small one for the altar. At St Christopher-le-Stocks, London, there were "two lecternes of tree standing in the quire." Besides these there were "a standing lectern of iron and 2 standing lecterns of tree in the rood-loft, and a great desk lectern for the great book and 2 smaller desk lecterns for the quire, and 3 lecterns of tree for the 3 altars." Probably only the first three of these were what we now call lecterns, the last being mere desks without stems.

The existing specimens of wooden lecterns are of two distinct types, those with a one-, two-, or four-sided desk, and those with an eagle, pelican, or other symbolic bird with outstretched wings.

Now, as a rule, the gospel lectern was used for a single book only, the gospel book or text, while the quire lectern was used for several. Very few churches possessed really comprehensive antiphoners and graduales, so tropers, sequencers, and hymnals were often needed to supplement them. It is, therefore, reasonable to assume that most lecterns with single desks are gospel lecterns, while those with two or more desks were most probably used for quire purposes. There are exceptions to this rule; for instance, an illumination in an epistle book in Trinity College library at Oxford shows the sub-deacon reading the epistle from a brass double desk, and, on the other hand, at Durham "there was low down in the quire another lectern of brass, not so curiously wrought, standing in the midst against the Stalls, a marvellous fair one, with an eagle in the height of it, and her wings spread abroad, wheron the Monks did lay their books when they sung their Legends at Mattins and other times."

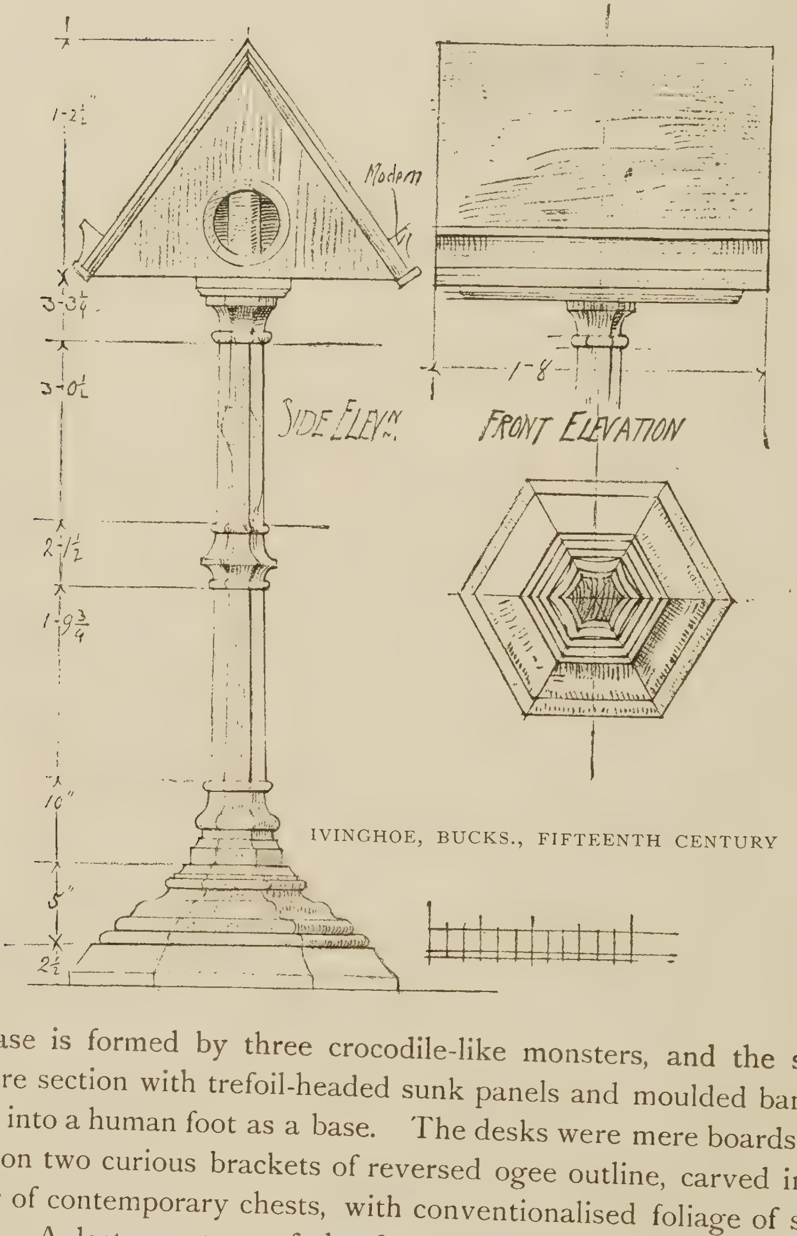
Though they are by no means common, there are a fair number of old wooden lecterns remaining in England. They are very widely distributed, and show few local peculiarities. The oldest lecterns are usually of the bird type, and that at Leighton Buzzard (208) is certainly not later than the beginning of the fourteenth century—the mouldings of the stem are not inconsistent with a thirteenth-century date. It is of octagonal section with moulded base, band, and capital, standing on a square plinth and terminating in a ball. The eagle which stands upon it may be original, but it is not a very pleasing composition. It is



LECTERN FORMERLY IN ST. CRUX, YORK.

excessively stout, and the poise of its head is unsuccessful. The wings and feathers are of rounded, sleepy outline. There are fragments of a chain for a book. The eagle lectern at Ottery St Mary, Devon (208), is of the first half of the fourteenth century, and now stands in the Lady chapel. The shaft, very different from that at Leighton Buzzard, is square on plan with diagonal buttresses, and two crocketted trefoiled ogee arches on each face. The base consists of three modern steps, and the weathered capping is also of recent date, but the eagle, standing on a ball decorated with shields, has the appearance of genuine work of the fourteenth century. Its pose is more pert and determined, its body more shapely, its feathers more crisply carved. The eagle at Astbury, Cheshire (208), is a fifteenth-century example of rather unusual design. The stem is square on plan, beaded at the angles, and tapers from the extremities to a large ball a little above the centre point, which is ornamented with small uncarved shields. The base is composed of two timbers crossing one another, shaped and chamfered, and four triangular traceried boards serve to keep the stem rigid. The eagle has a remarkably globular body, covered with scale-like feathers of a regularity most uncommon in mediæval work, and its legs are short and stout, with absurdly long claws firmly clasping the usual ball.

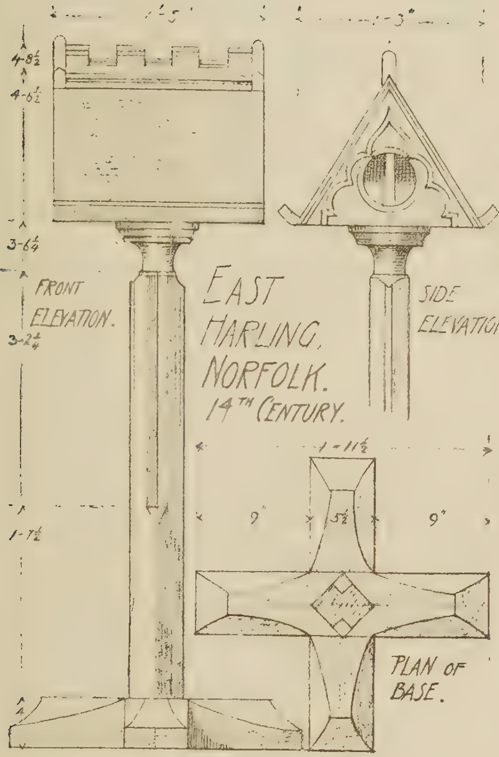
The desk lecterns are generally charming examples of mediæval art, much more attractive than the eagles. The earliest are of the fourteenth century. The single desk at Bury, Hunts. (196), is no later than the first quarter. The octagonal shaft has moulded capital and base, the latter brought out to the original square by an ingenious system of chamfers. The desk has evidently been reduced in width, for the arcade carved on the upright front panel is cut short at each end. The spandrels of these arches and the triangular end panels are carved with foliage of the naturalistic type. The stem of a lectern still in use at East Hendred, Berks. (207), is about the same age, and is an extraordinary composition. It is remarkable for having provision for two desks, the upper for use when standing and the other for use when kneeling. It is therefore evident that it was a cantor's or quire lectern, though the church was never anything but parochial.

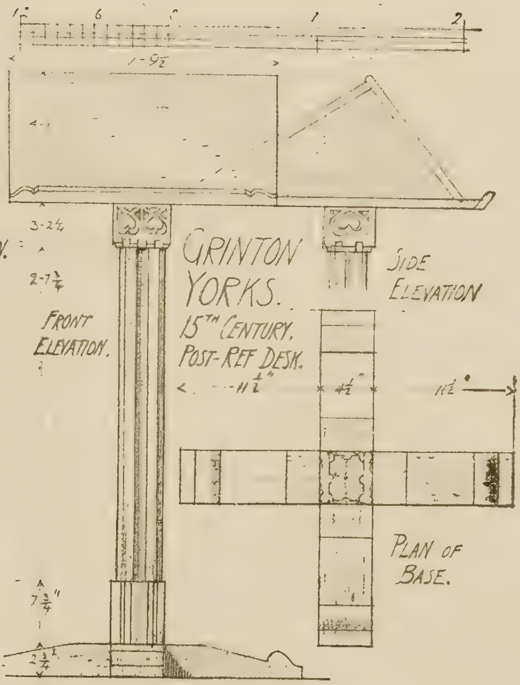


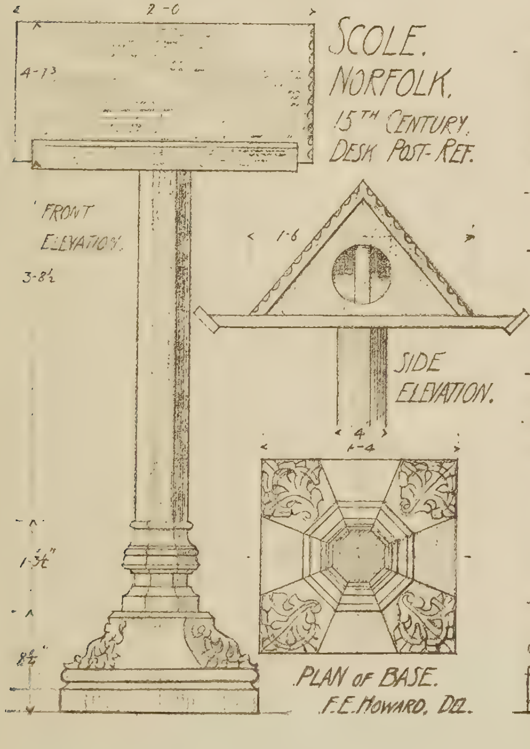
IVINGHOE, BUCKS., FIFTEENTH CENTURY

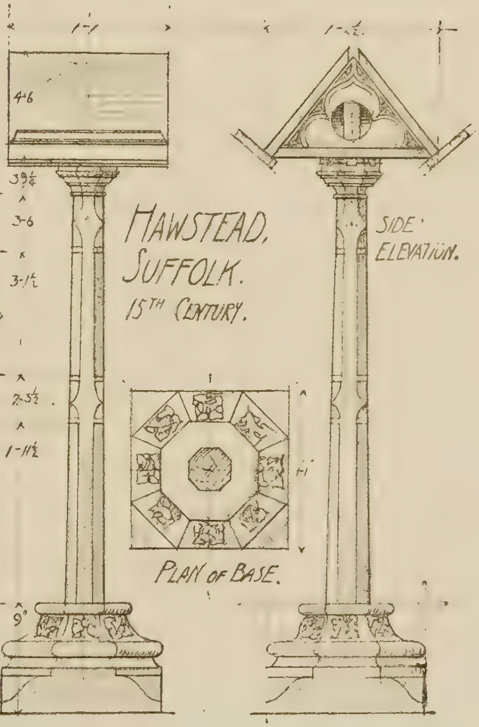
The base is formed by three crocodile-like monsters, and the stem, of square section with trefoil-headed sunk panels and moulded band, is shaped into a human foot as a base. The desks were mere boards supported on two curious brackets of reversed ogee outline, carved in the manner of contemporary chests, with conventionalised foliage of spiral pattern. A lectern stem of the fourteenth century of less barbaric design remains at Peakirk, Northants. It has eight slender filleted shafts with moulded capital and base, and has an original stone plinth.

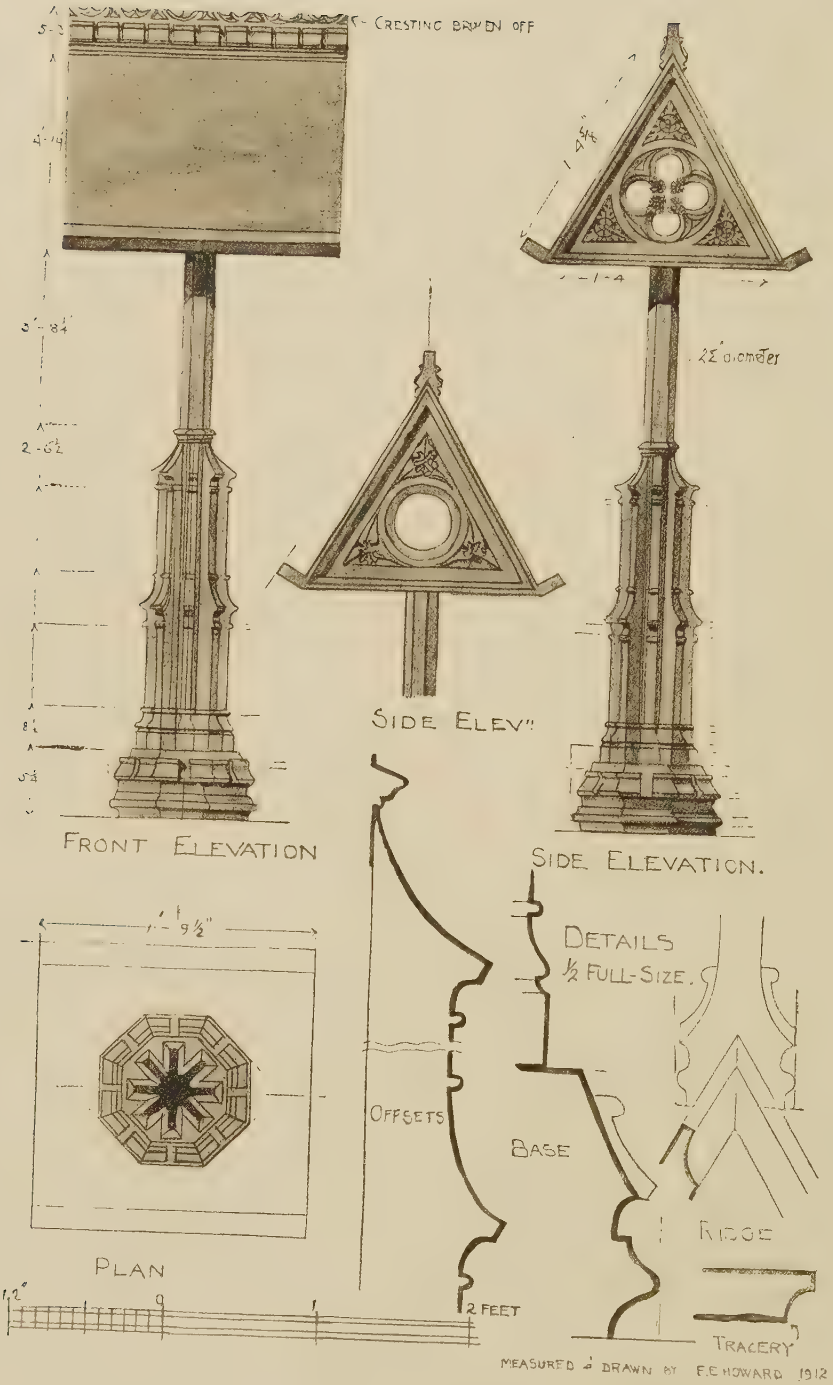
Fifteenth-century lecterns are far more beautiful in design. The


1-5
1-3"
4-8½
4-6½
3-6¼
FRONT ELEVATION.
3-2¼
EAST HARLING, NORFOLK.
14TH CENTURY.
SIDE ELEVATION.
1-11½
9"
5½
9"
1-7½
4
PLAN OF BASE.


1" 6 0 1 2
1-9½
4-1
3-2½
2-7¾
FRONT ELEVATION.
GRINTON YORKS.
15TH CENTURY.
POST-REF DESK.
SIDE ELEVATION
11½"
4½"
11½"
7¾"
2¾
PLAN OF BASE.


2-0
4-1¾
SCOLE. NORFOLK.
15TH CENTURY.
DESK POST-REF.
FRONT ELEVATION.
3-8½
1-6
SIDE ELEVATION.
4
1-4
1-3½"
8½
PLAN OF BASE.
F.E. HOWARD, DEL.


1-1
1-½
4-6
3¾
3-6
3-1½
2-5½
1-11½
9"
HAWSTEAD, SUFFOLK.
15TH CENTURY.
SIDE ELEVATION.
1
11
PLAN OF BASE.

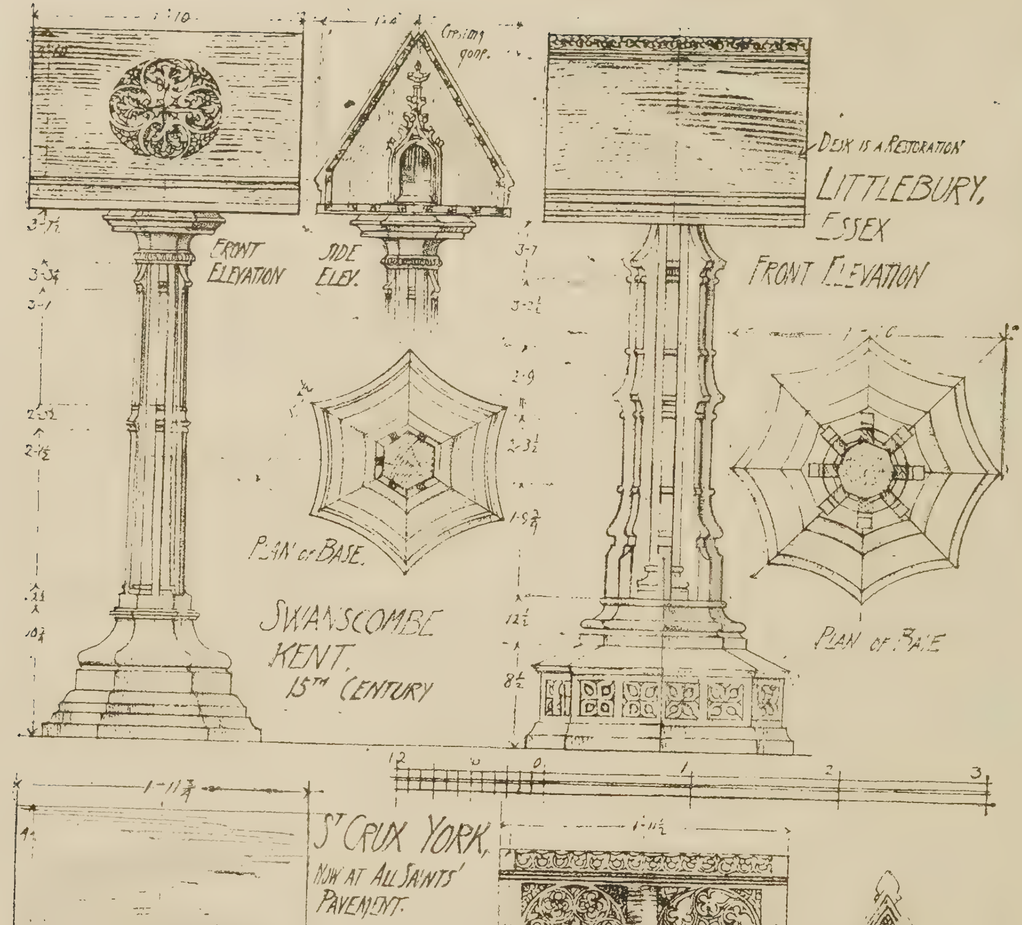


BLYTHBURGH, SUFFOLK
FIFTEENTH-CENTURY OAK QUIRE LECTERN

simplest form of stem is square on plan, as at Grinton, Yorks. (201), where the stem is simply a grooved post, and the cap and base rectangular blocks, the former quaintly carved with a kind of "Tudor flower." The stolen lectern at East Harling (201) had a curious lozenge-shaped stem, grooved and beaded. A polygonal shaft is more usual. Scole is an example with a moulded base only, Ranworth (209) has both cap and base, while the stems at Edlesborough and Ivinghoe (200) have a moulded band as well. The section of the shaft varies greatly: at Lingfield it is square; at Swanscombe (204) hexagonal; at Scole (201) octagonal; at Aldbury it is an irregular octagon. The sides were sometimes ornamented with sunk panels; these occur at Detling, Kent (207, 209), but the shafts are rarely stout enough to need this treatment. More often they are adorned with little buttresses. The origin may perhaps be seen at Hawstead (201), though the actual example is a late one. Here the buttresses are formed by the stops of the chamfer reducing the shaft from the square to the octagon. At Aldbury there is a lectern with broad buttresses carved out of the solid on alternate sides, and at Swanscombe another with little buttresses applied to every side. At Littlebury (204) they are placed against the angles; in this instance they are planted on. Planted buttresses may project more boldly than those worked in the solid without undue waste of material, as at Bury, Hunts. (196), where the shaft has four broad pierced and traceried "flying buttresses" crocketted and pinnacled like those of the font-covers. At Blythburgh (202, 209) they only rise half-way up the shaft; at Littlebury, Essex, they occupy all the space from base to desk, almost hiding the shaft. At Shipdham (204) the stem is composed of three buttresses with angular fillets between, decorated with quatrefoils, and the shaft is suppressed.

The richest treatment of all is found in the lectern at All Saints' Pavement, York (204), where the stem is square with angle buttresses, between each of which is a niche with proper canopy and base for a statue. This is the final development of the design found in the stem of the fourteenth-century lectern of Ottery St Mary (208).

The less elaborate bases are formed by two pieces of timber

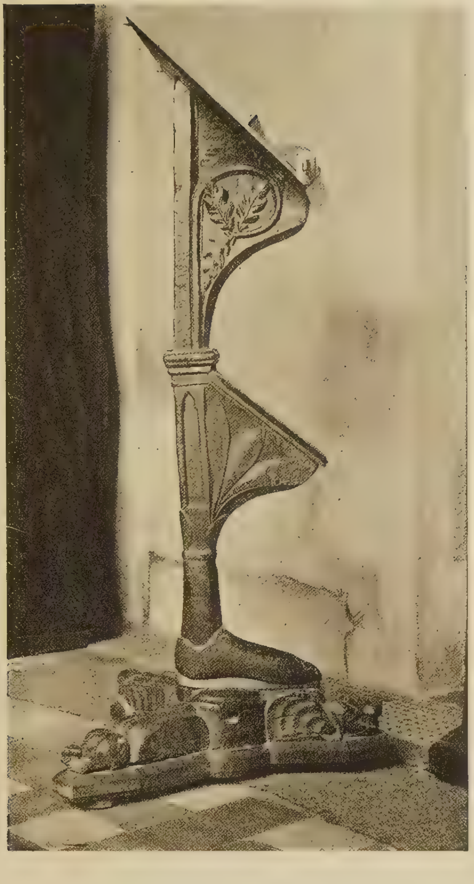

1-10
1-4
Cresting gone.
3-7½
FRONT ELEVATION
SIDE ELEV.
3-3¾
3-1
2-3½
2-1½
PLAN OF BASE.
SWANSCOMBE KENT, 15TH CENTURY
10¾
DESK IS A RESTORATION
LITTLEBURY, ESSEX
FRONT ELEVATION
3-7
3-2½
2-9
2-3½
1-9¾
1-6
PLAN OF BASE
12½
8½
12
6
0
1
2
3
1-11¾
ST CRUX YORK, NOW AT ALL SAINTS' PAVEMENT.
SIDE ELEVATION
2-8½
2-3½
2-0
1-5½
1-4
BASE.
1-11½
3-2
3-0
2-8½
2-1½
1-11
1-2
BASE
SHIPDHAM, NORFOLK
F.E. HOWARD. del.

forming a cross. Grinton and East Harling are examples. At East Hendred (207) and Shipdham (204) the base is composed of three pieces radiating from a central block. The cross-pieces are generally shaped and chamfered more or less elaborately. Those at Hendred are grotesquely carved, while those at Shipdham support lions. In a few cases the stem may have been fixed directly into the floor, as at Bury. The most usual base is a moulded polygonal block, sometimes battlemented, like that of the Blythburgh lectern (209), sometimes relieved with carved paterae, as at Scole (201). An octagon brought out to the square is a common form, but the hexagonal stems needed hexagonal bases; Swanscombe (204) is a good instance with hollow sides. Littlebury (204) has a really magnificent stand; it is a hollow-sided octagon, and has a plinth decorated with quatrefoiled squares. It is worthy of note that the shaft generally has a base of its own, in addition to that forming the base of the whole composition. Buttresses are usually stopped by the top member of the base, but at St Crux (All Saints', Pavement), York (204), the base-mould runs round them. Detling (209) has buttresses with returned mouldings around its base. The stem of the Lenham lectern (209) is very unusual in England, and consists of a cupboard-like arrangement of linen panelling.

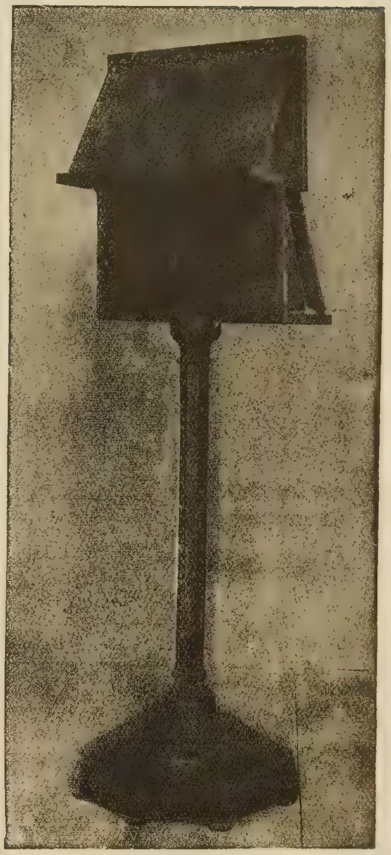
Many lecterns have lost their original desks; they were very lightly constructed of a base-board and two sloping boards forming the desks, with triangular pieces at the gable ends to stiffen them. Scole, Edlesborough, and Grinton (201) have been fitted with desks of lower slope to fit them for reading the lessons. At Littlebury and Cheddar only the stem remains. The mediæval desks were very acutely pitched for singing from. They were often charmingly treated, the gable ends receiving most of the ornamentation, as the desks were normally hidden by the great service books. The verges are generally moulded, or even decorated with paterae, as at York and Swanscombe (204). At Bury the gables are crocketted, while at Hawstead and Harling (201) there are cusped barge-boards. The gable ends are usually pierced with small windows, as at Lingfield, which has a little arched opening at each end, or Swanscombe, where the windows have crocketted hood-mouldings. Sometimes a quatrefoil or circle is pierced and the spandrels are carved, as in the Blythburgh lectern. The sloping sides of the desks are occasionally decorated with tracery, as at Detling (207), where very elaborate and deeply moulded rose windows are pierced in each of the four desks, and the spandrels and remainder of the surfaces are carved in low relief. The elaborate desk at Shipdham (204) also has traceried circles carved in this position. The ridge of the desk is sometimes plain, probably because it was the custom to cover the desk with a lectern cloth of tapestry or embroidery, but some are enriched with a moulded ridge, frequently battlemented. Carved crestings were not unusual, as at St Michael at Thorn, Norwich, and Blythburgh (202), where the greater part of the cresting has been broken off. The four-sided desks were commonly crowned with a little figure of some saint.

The lectern at Ranworth (207) deserves special notice. It has two single desks sloping in opposite directions, one above the other. The back of the upper desk has a plain-song hymn melody painted upon it, while that of the lower desk is decorated with a representation of St John's eagle holding a lettered scroll.

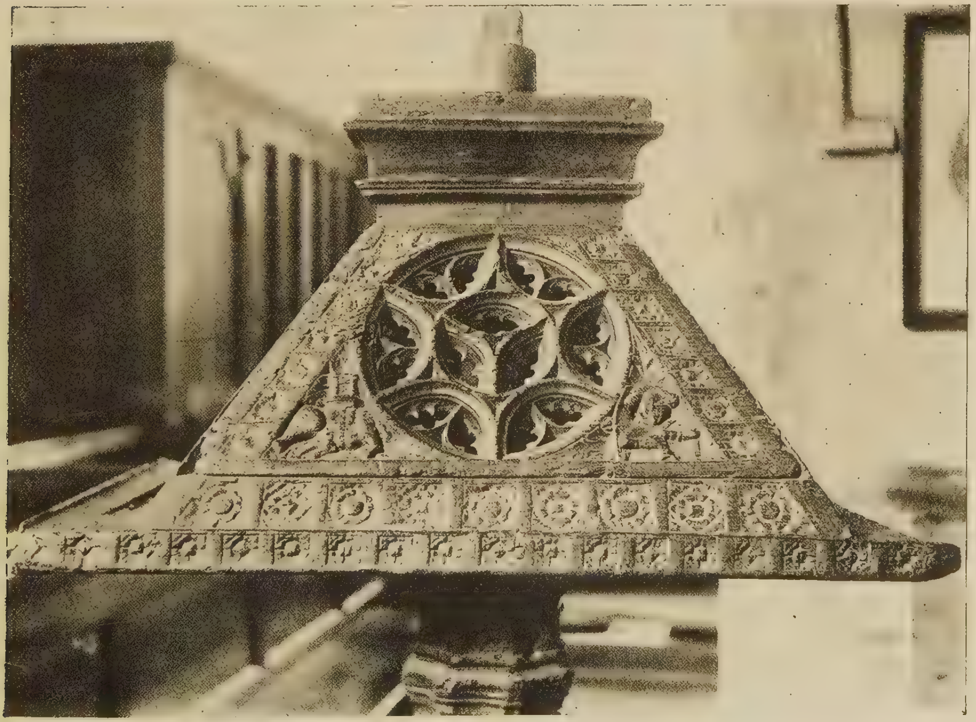
ROMSEY ABBEY, HAMPSHIRE, CHEST



EAST HENDRED, BERKS.

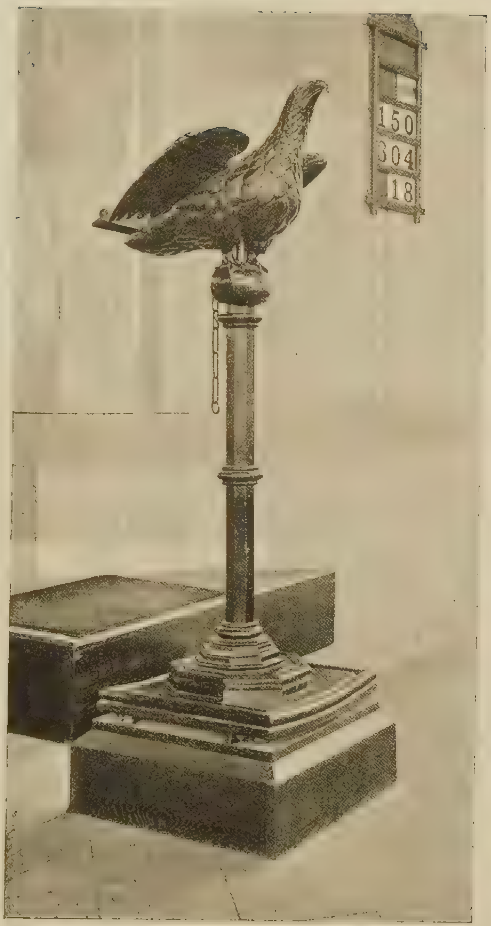


RANWORTH, NORFOLK

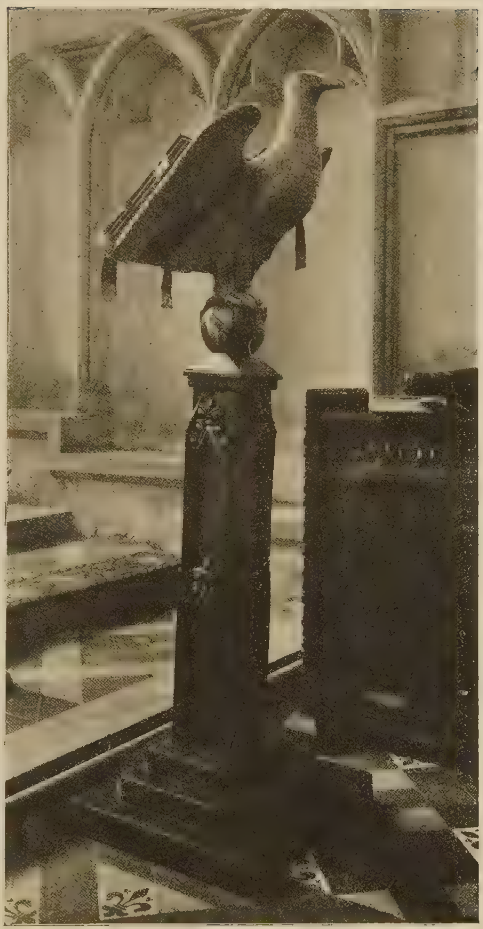


DETLING, KENT, FOUR-SIDED DESK, LATE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

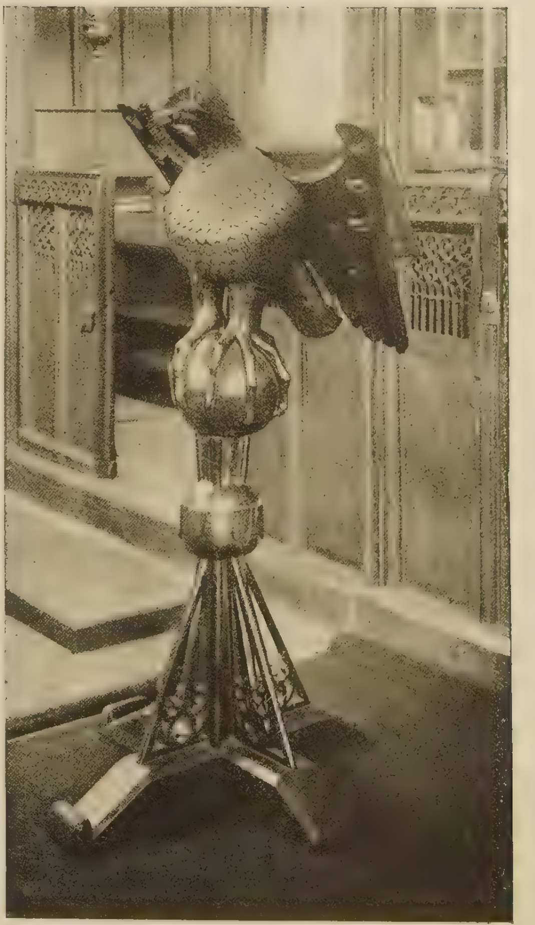
THE EAGLE LECTERN



LEIGHTON BUZZARD, BEDS.,
LATE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

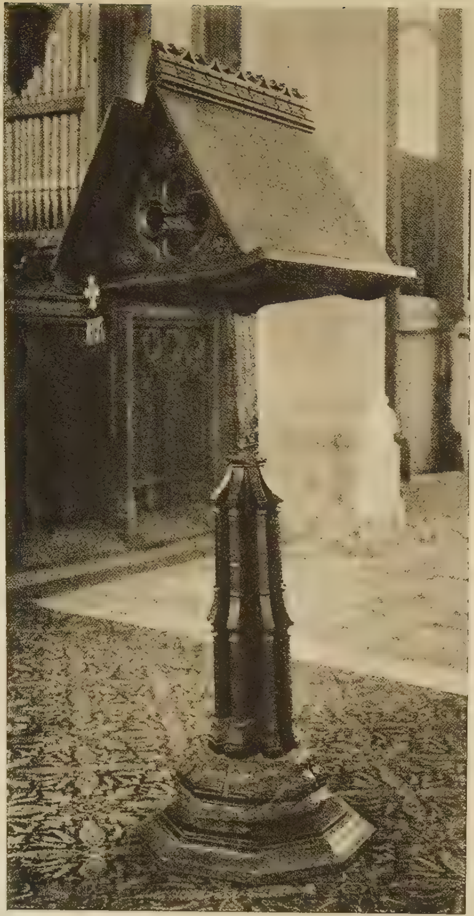


OTTERY ST MARY, DEVON,
FOURTEENTH CENTURY

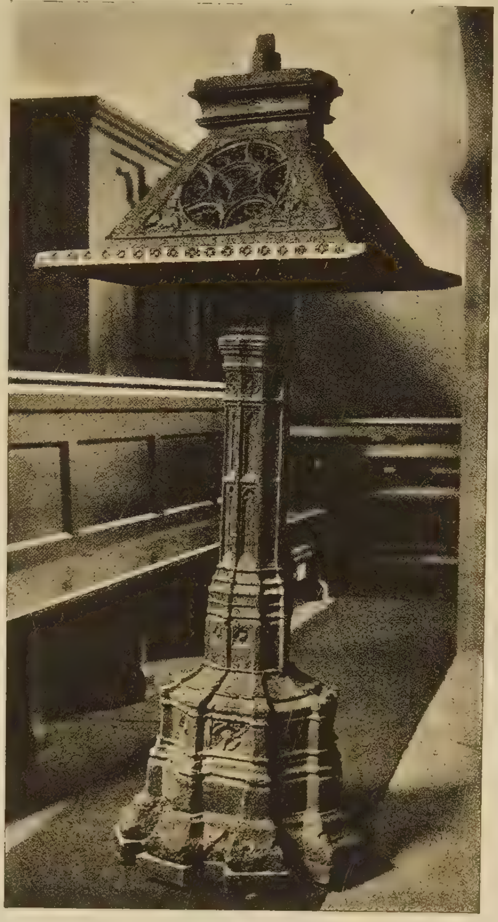


ASTBURY, CHESHIRE,
FIFTEENTH CENTURY

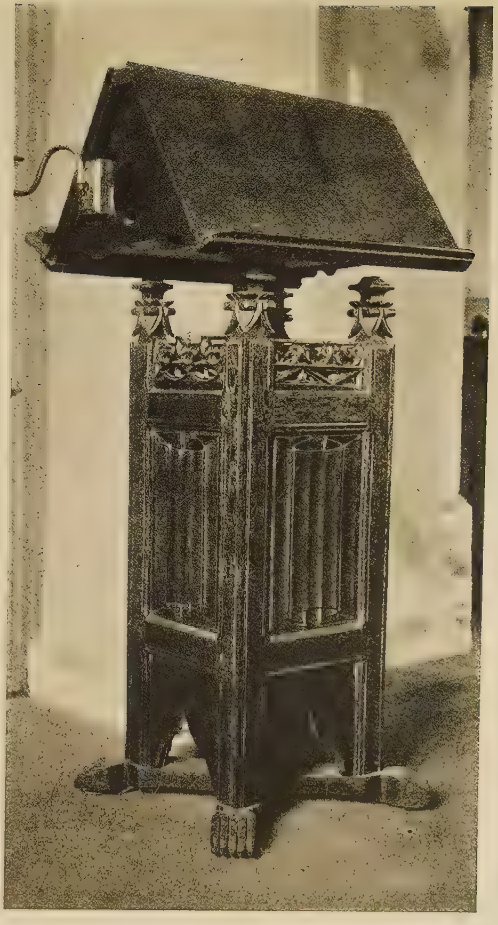
THE DESK LECTERN—DOUBLE AND FOUR-SIDED



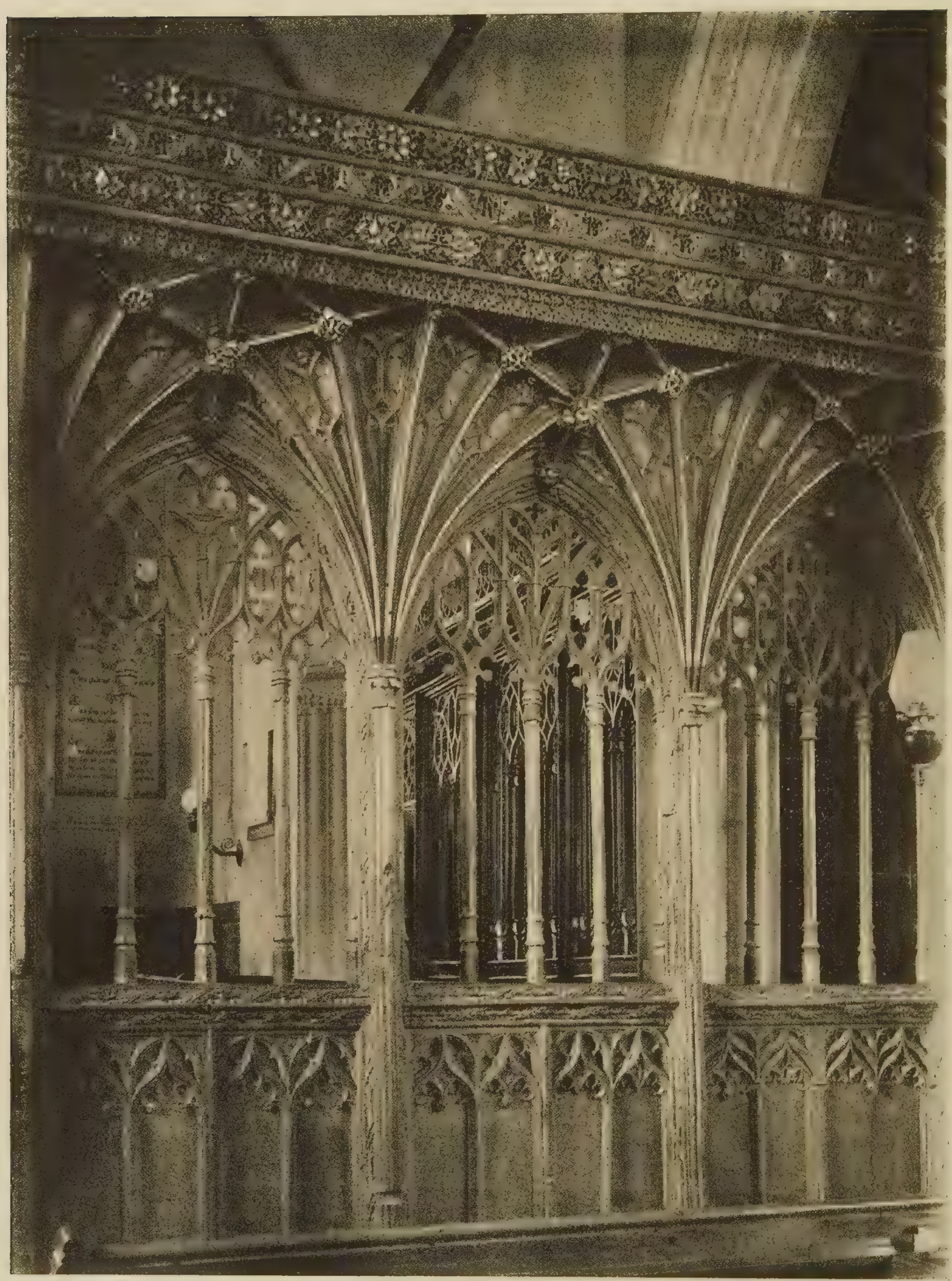
BLYTHBURGH, SUFFOLK,
EARLY FIFTEENTH CENTURY



DETLING, KENT,
LATE FIFTEENTH CENTURY



LENHAM, KENT,
EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY



KENTISBERE, DEVON, LATE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

V

SCREENS, ROODS, AND LOFTS

ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF SCREEN AND LOFT

The Chancel Screen.—A chancel screen is an indispensable part of a Catholic church, and its history can be traced back to remote antiquity. The earliest form of religious building was undoubtedly a little sanctuary, sheltering some holy thing, such as an image of the god, an altar, or both. Such a sanctuary was entered only by the priesthood or the initiated, while the worshippers grouped themselves about the door of access. The next development was the addition of a somewhat larger chamber to protect the worshippers from the elements, so that the door of access became what we should now call a chancel arch. The final step was to combine the two chambers into a single structure to shelter both priest and congregation, the traditional seclusion of the sanctuary being maintained by a screen of wood or stone, occupying the same position as the west door of the first type of building, or the wall separating nave and chancel in the second. Thus the custom arose of setting aside different portions of a building for various purposes, more or less holy, or for various classes of worshippers, and the practice is common to nearly all religions. The experience of ages proves that it induces order and reverence, while its abandonment by the reformers of the sixteenth century produced the opposite effect.

All three types are represented in Christian churches. Naturally the fully developed plan, with nave and sanctuary under a single roof, was adopted by the Christian converts made among the civilised nations around the Mediterranean Sea, and this type was even introduced into Roman Britain, if the theory is to be received that the building excavated at Silchester is a church. However, in the remoter parts of the Roman empire the more primitive plans were generally adopted, both in the East and in the West. In the British Isles the little sanctuary chamber, built by the efforts of the missioner himself, is represented by the little chapels at Gallarus and Kilmachedar in Ireland, and St Piran's Oratory in Cornwall. These are orientated, and the entrance is a small archway at the west end, formerly closed by a door. The second type, in which a nave for the accommodation of the converts is added at their expense to the west end of the sanctuary, is represented by the Saxon churches of the type of Escomb, Durham, and Bradford-on-Avon, Wilts., where the narrow and low chancel arch, probably closed by some form of grille, is evidently the successor of the western door of the oratory. This is the normal mediæval parish church plan all over England, with the exception of the west country, Wales, and north-western counties. During the later mediæval period it gradually developed into the third type of plan in two distinct ways. By one course of development the doorway was enlarged and the west wall of the chancel pared away, while the door became transparent and expanded into a screen, generally of timber. The process is very easily traced. First there are the Saxon churches with their narrow chancel arches; by the twelfth century the arch had lost its character of doorway, and had become wider, but it was often richly decorated, while the screens, although there is no existing evidence to show what they actually were, must certainly have been subordinate. This continued in the Midland parish churches at least until the middle of the thirteenth century, when the arches began to be built higher and wider and were less elaborately treated, while the screen began to gain in importance. By the fourteenth century all attempt at a decorative treatment of the chancel arch was abandoned, and the screen reached a very high point of development, and in the fifteenth century the arch was reduced to a mere stone rib, carrying the gable wall, utterly insignificant in comparison with the elaborate screen and rood-loft below. The last step, the abandonment of the chancel arch, was taken at North Walsham, Norfolk, as early as 1380, but did not come into general use until the end of the fifteenth century. In this case the screen forms the only division between the people's nave and the rector's chancel, and the plan resembles that of the early basilican churches of Italy.

The other course of development can also be clearly traced, but examples are much rarer. Instead of enlarging the chancel arch, the same purpose, namely, the exposing of the sanctuary to the view of the faithful, was attained by piercing openings or squints in the walls on each side of the chancel arch. The larger these were made the more effectual they were, and at length they grew into two or three light openings, so that practically nothing of the lower portion of the chancel wall remained. The final step was to combine the arch and the squints into a single design, founded on that of the contemporary wooden screens.

Thus, in the greater part of England, the screen seems to have been derived from the west wall of the chancel, rather than directly from the low walls or colonnades of the early churches of Rome or Byzantium. Of course solid chancel walls, low barriers, and colonnades are merely different forms of the same thing, a division between the people and the sanctuary. It is only natural to find that in the highly civilised parts of the Roman empire the barrier was low and insignificant, while in remoter districts the barrier was emphasised in order to impress the necessity for awe and reverence upon the half-barbarous converts.

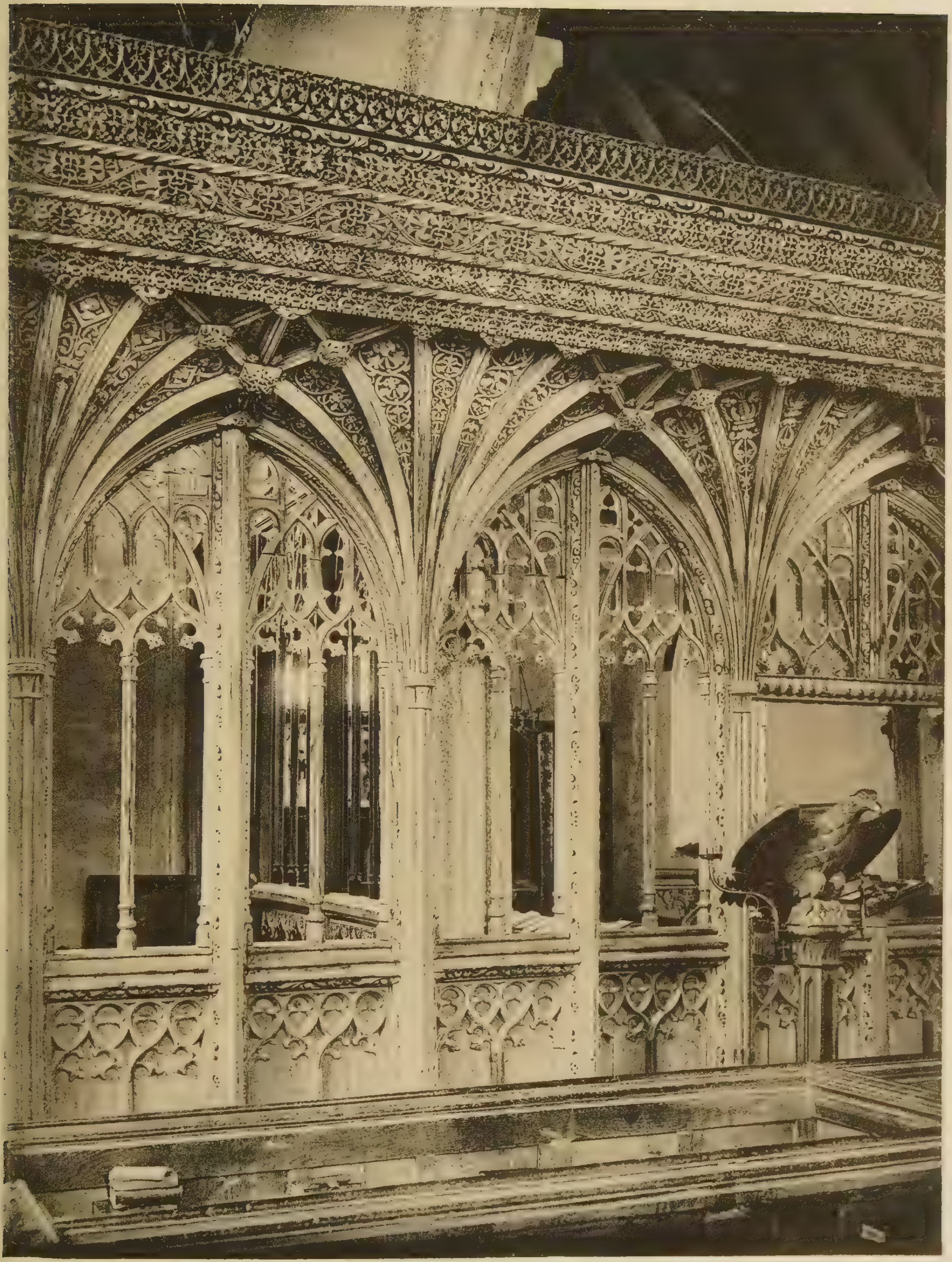
In Devon and Cornwall, and in Wales, there are actual remains of the little sanctuaries of the first type, traditionally believed to have been erected by saintly missioners from Ireland. When the time came for the erection of a nave by the converts, it was made the same width as the chancel; the two chambers appear to have been thrown into one, save for a partition of timber producing the third type of plan, omitting the intermediate step found in the Saxon nave and chancel churches. Whatever may be its origin, it is a striking fact that in the extreme west of England the chancel arch is practically unknown, while screens have an extraordinary importance.

The omission of the chancel arch is occasionally found in the south-eastern counties; here it is reasonable to derive the screens directly from those of Italy, through the influence of the mission of St Augustine. At St Pancras', Canterbury, and other churches traditionally supposed to have been built by the saint or his successors, the nave and chancel are practically continuous, but there are distinct traces of a triple arcade or colonnade. It is not unreasonable to suppose that this was directly introduced from Italy, particularly as the triple arcades are used in conjunction with the purely Italian apsidal sanctuary. The triple arcade continued to be used from time to time right down to the fifteenth century, and it strongly influenced the design of the wood screenwork. Evidently there were sentimental reasons for its survival.

It has been shown that the chief liturgical use of the chancel screen is to guard the high altar, and still more the Blessed Sacrament hanging in the pix above it, from possible profanation. Nevertheless, it is extraordinary how few mediæval screens were ever provided with doors, while still fewer had locks. Obviously the likelihood of sacrilege was very remote in those times of simple faith and devotion, and the division was symbolic rather than practical.

Besides its liturgical use, the screen has a legal signification. It has been suggested that the earliest Christian buildings in these islands were sanctuaries built by the efforts of the first missionaries, and that the nave was probably added at the cost of the converts. This tradition has never died out, for even at the present day the rector is responsible for the upkeep of the chancel, while the duty of repairing the nave rests with the parishioners, and the screen, the property of the parish, forms the boundary between their respective domains.

It is not difficult to understand the popularity of screens in the later Middle Ages, for they offer exceptional opportunities to the designer. They give a wonderful effect of dignity and reserve to a church, and convey an impression of vast length and size, while the charm of delicately pierced carving and tracery, silhouetted against the light or shade of the chancel beyond and contrasted with the more vigorous lines of the structure, naturally made an irresistible appeal to the mediæval lover of beautiful craftsmanship.



LAPFORD, NORTH DEVON, LATE 15TH CENTURY SCREEN.

Minor Screens.—Besides the chancel screen there were other lesser barriers. In early Christian buildings the people's part of the church was sometimes divided by a screen or structural division into a western narthex for the unbaptized, and a nave for those who had been received into the Church. Signs of such a division are evident in some early Saxon plans, but the necessity for it disappeared with the complete conversion of the country, and it was soon discarded. The screens which sometimes remain in the tower arches at the west end of a few eastern county churches, as at Addlethorpe (255), are the only mediæval representatives of the narthex screen. They generally support western galleries for ringers, organ, or singers.

Similarly the chancel was sometimes divided into quire and sanctuary. In the former the priest and clerks sang their offices, while the latter was set aside for the altar and the celebration of the Mass. It was found sufficient in later times to mark this division by a mere difference in level, and by the use of a veil shutting off all view of the sanctuary in Lent, for only those were admitted to the quire who could also be reasonably expected to behave with reverence towards the sanctuary. At the Reformation the illegal destruction of screens led to the invasion of the chancel by the laity, and rendered necessary the erection of altar rails, which had been hitherto unknown. Screens were also necessary to enclose the quire when there were aisles to the chancel, as at Beverley minster.

Side altars in honour of various saints were a very early introduction into the Christian Church. The exact date is a matter of dispute, but it is probable that even the earliest English churches had at least two side altars, and in later days their number increased. It was obviously desirable to protect them by enclosing them with screenwork, like the high altar. These were known in the Middle Ages as parclose screens. Winthorpe, Lincolnshire (221), is a typical example of a parclose about a side altar in a parish church, while Exeter has several lovely screens enclosing chapels.

The side altars were of two kinds, those maintained by the parishioners in general, and those maintained by guilds or by private individuals in order that masses for their souls should be said in perpetuity. The latter were called chantry altars, and separate chapels were often attached to the parish church to contain them, in order to avoid encroaching on the rights of the parishioners. These generally remained the property of the donor or his heirs, and were not made over to the parish. These chapels were screened off from the rest of the church to preserve the legal rights of the founder. Private chantry chapels do not seem to have been in use before the middle of the thirteenth century, but towards the end of the fifteenth they were extremely numerous. At the Reformation the chantries were suppressed and their endowments confiscated, but while the guild chapels were thrown open to the church by the destruction of their screens, the heirs of the founder of a private chantry chapel usually insisted on their rights to the fabric, and used the chapel as a private pew. On this account a number of beautiful examples have survived, such as those at Burford and Cirencester. Another fine chapel built over a stone tomb is in Oxford cathedral, and is known as the "Watching Chamber."

The Rood.—It is uncertain at what date the custom arose of displaying a figure of Our Lord upon the cross over the chancel barrier for the devotion of the people, but it is certain that the practice was general before the date of the earliest Saxon churches. The very name "Rood," applied to such a figure, is Saxon. In churches of the Bradford-on-Avon type there was a vast expanse of blank wall over the little chancel arch, and it is reasonable to suppose that the rood was of stone, built into the wall, since two figures of adoring angels, ancestors of the "splendid and glistening archangels" of which we read in the sixteenth century "Rites of Durham," still remain in their original place above the chancel arch, though the rood has disappeared. A stone rood of very early date, now cut back flush with the wall, remains in the church of Headbourne Worthy, Hants, above the west door. That at Langford, Oxon., now built into the side wall of the porch, might well have been built into the wall over the existing late Saxon chancel arch.

When wider and higher chancel arches came into use in the thirteenth century the upper part of the arch was very frequently blocked up by a boarded or plastered partition to form a background to the rood, which was often supported directly on the head of the screen, as at Harwell, Berks., and Chinnor, Oxon. (226), where the three mortices for the rood, Mary and John, still remain. However, in lofty churches, the rood was occasionally supported on a rood beam, a practice which was introduced at a very early period, when the conditions of the case demanded this arrangement, particularly in monastic or cathedral churches. Examples of the thirteenth century exist on the Continent, and even at this date the figure of Our Lord is accompanied by images of Our Lady and St John the Evangelist, and also by winged cherubim, such as are found at Saxon Bradford. The realism of later mediæval times added figures of the two thieves struggling in cruel torment in contrast to the calm dignity in suffering of the central figure. The mortices in the curious portion of a rood beam preserved at Cullompton, Devon, furnish evidence that this arrangement was not unknown in England. The latest stage in the development of the rood was the addition of St Mary Magdalene, clutching the base of the cross in passionate grief, which appears to have been an entirely Continental conception. In smaller churches the rood usually stood on the front parapet of the loft, but it is by no means unusual to find the outline of the rood on Doom paintings, showing that in these cases at least the rood was fixed over the eastern parapet.

These blank silhouettes are found at Wenhaston, Northleigh, Ludham, and other places, and show that the cross in common use in fifteenth-century England was either ragulé or crocheted, and that the arms often terminated in medallions, sprouting into fleur-de-lys, as in those of the Continent.

A great deal of devotion was paid to the rood in the Middle Ages; a hanging lamp was generally suspended in front of it, maintained perpetually, as at Burford, Oxon., or lighted at certain hours of the day, as at Henley in the same county. At festivals multitudes of tapers, usually placed on the rood beam, were lighted in its honour.

This led to an almost complete destruction of roods at the Reformation.

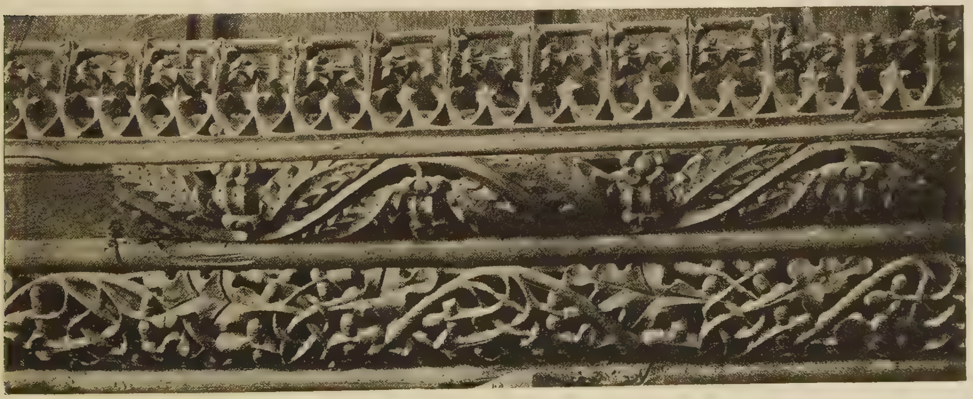
There appear to be but two surviving examples of wooden roods, namely that in the chapel at Cartmell Fell, Lancs., and in the Powysland Museum. An image of Our Lady, from a crucifixion group which may have stood upon a screen, is curiously placed upon a hammer-beam at Cawston, Norfolk.

The Rood-Loft.—In a large building it is impossible for the reader of scriptures to make himself audible unless he is provided with a raised pulpit or platform. In the oldest of the larger churches of Italy these took the form of a pair of pulpits, placed on either side of the quire, one of which was for the reading of the epistle and the other for the gospel. As time went on these were moved further and further away from the altar, until in the twelfth century they were generally put on either side of the screen door. In the West the further step was taken of joining the two ambos into a single stage or loft at the west end of the quire, bridging over the quire doorway. Gradually the custom was introduced of singing not only the epistle and gospel, but also the gradual and alleluia, and at last the loft developed into a singing gallery and organ loft, which was known as the pulpitum. There is a fine wooden pulpitum at Hexham (222), and there is another in the collegiate church of Edington (222). In the greater churches this structure was generally entirely distinct from the rood screen, which was situated some distance further west, dividing the people's nave from the monastic or capitular portion of the building. The latter screen, against which the nave altar was placed, supported the rood and its attendant images and lights, and it was necessary in great churches to provide a stage called the rood-loft from which these figures could be cleaned, veiled in Lent, and their lights attended to. It is possible that the very plain and much altered screen in Little Malvern Priory church is a modest example of a monastic rood screen of wood. In some monastic churches the rood screen and the pulpitum seem to have been combined, a process requiring some ingenuity, since, while the rood screen had a single altar in the middle of the western side, with a doorway on either side, the pulpitum necessarily had a central doorway, owing to the traditional arrangement of the stalls in the quire.

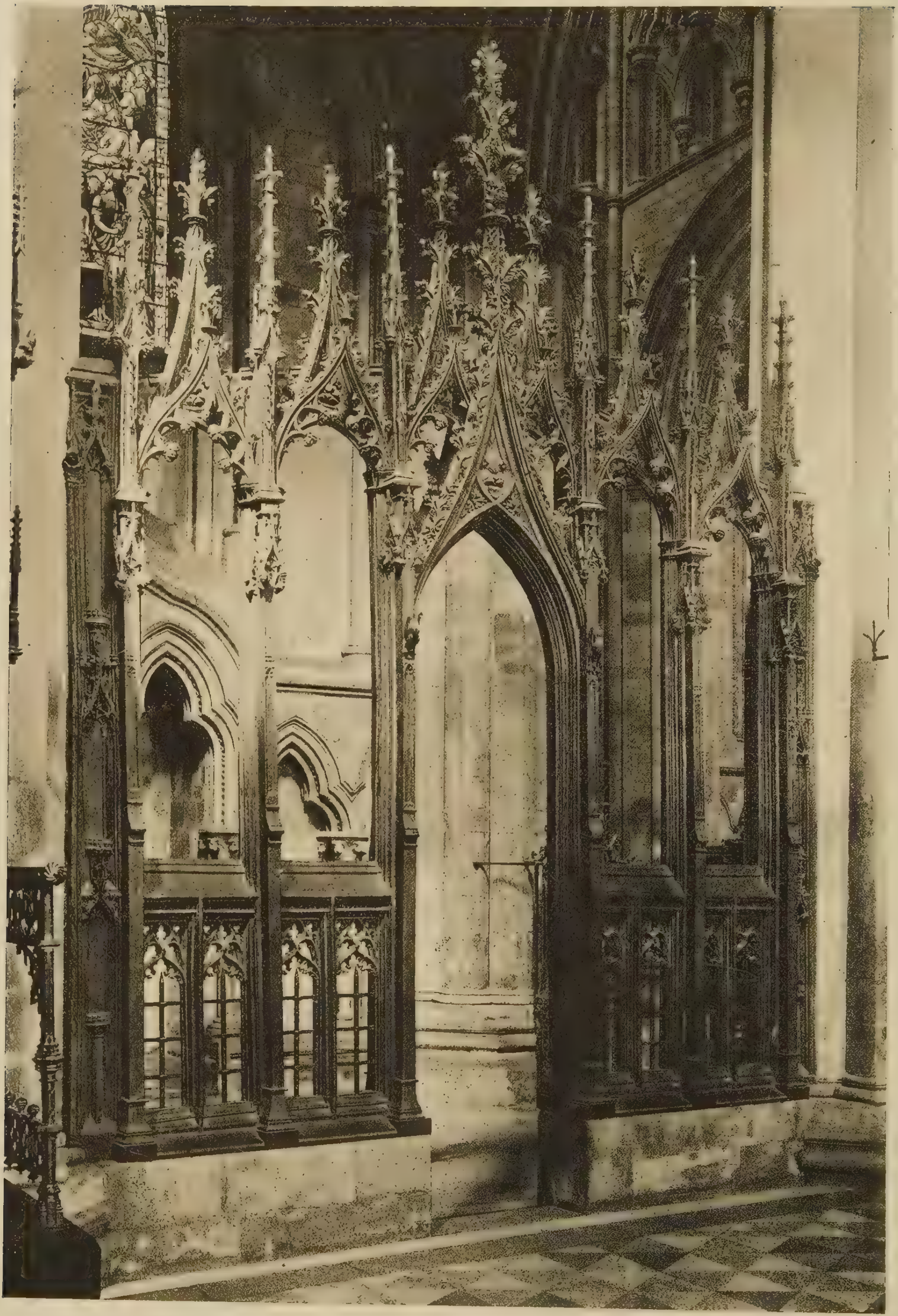
In the early years of the fourteenth century the parish churches which were already provided with chancel screens and roods began to perceive the beauty and convenience of this arrangement, and built lofts, chiefly for convenience of access to the rood, but also for use as music galleries, either on their existing chancel screens or renewing the whole structure. The liturgical use of the parochial rood-loft requires confirmation. As the fifteenth century advanced, rood-lofts were erected all over the country, until at the Reformation there was probably no church, however small, which did not possess one. One of the finest, though not the most perfect, is the lovely rood-loft of Flamborough (223).

They were condemned by the reformers on the ground that they had been used for superstitious purposes. In some dioceses their destruction was ordered, while in others it appears that their use as music galleries was not objected to, provided they were removed to the west end. The destruction or removal of the loft frequently led to the removal of the chancel screen itself, though at no time has this been legal.

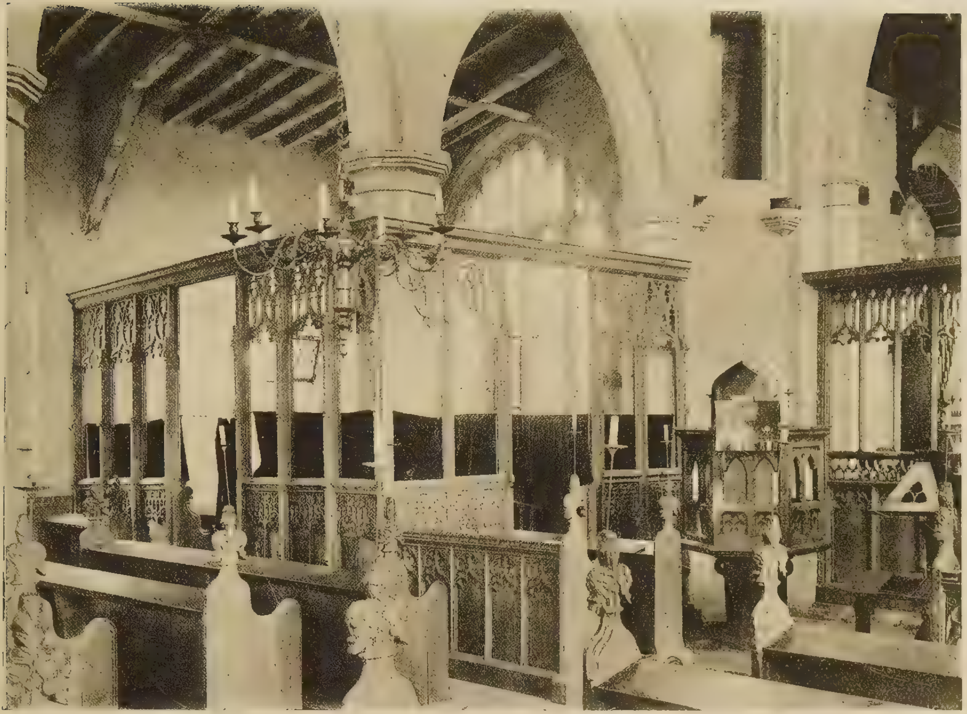
There is some evidence for the use of the loft as a chapel, chiefly in the West, where the lofts were of great width. The piscinæ of these rood-loft altars may sometimes be observed in the east wall of the nave, high above the floor. This practice does not seem to have been at all general, and was unknown in the eastern counties, where the screens are of a very light and airy description, and the lofts are extremely narrow.



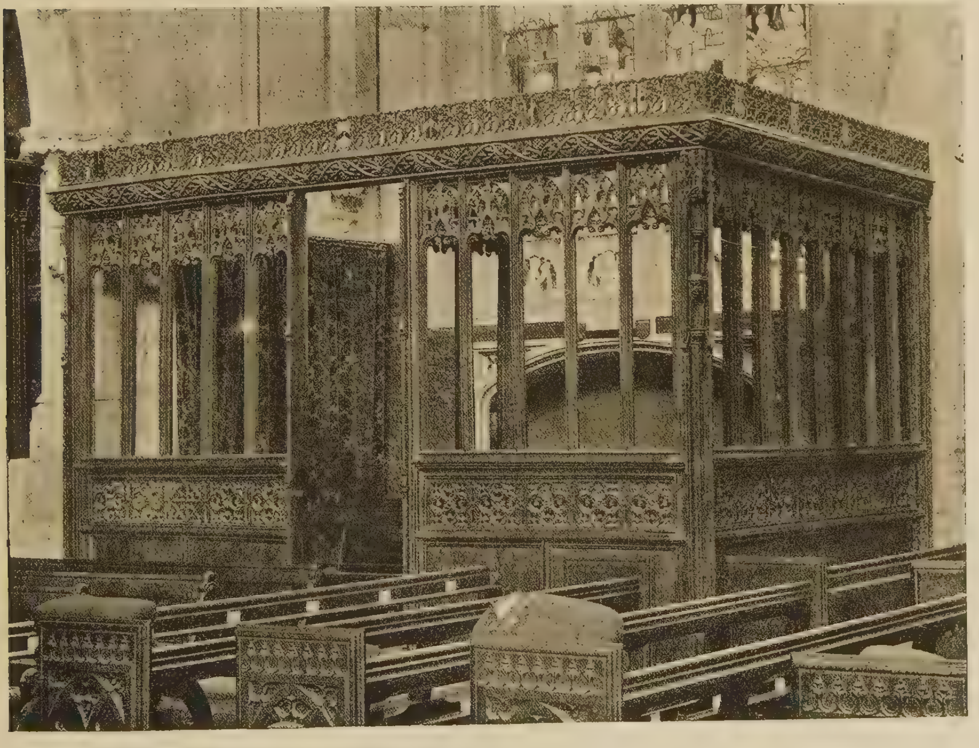
LLANWNOG, MONTGOMERY, DETAIL OF SCREEN, EAST SIDE



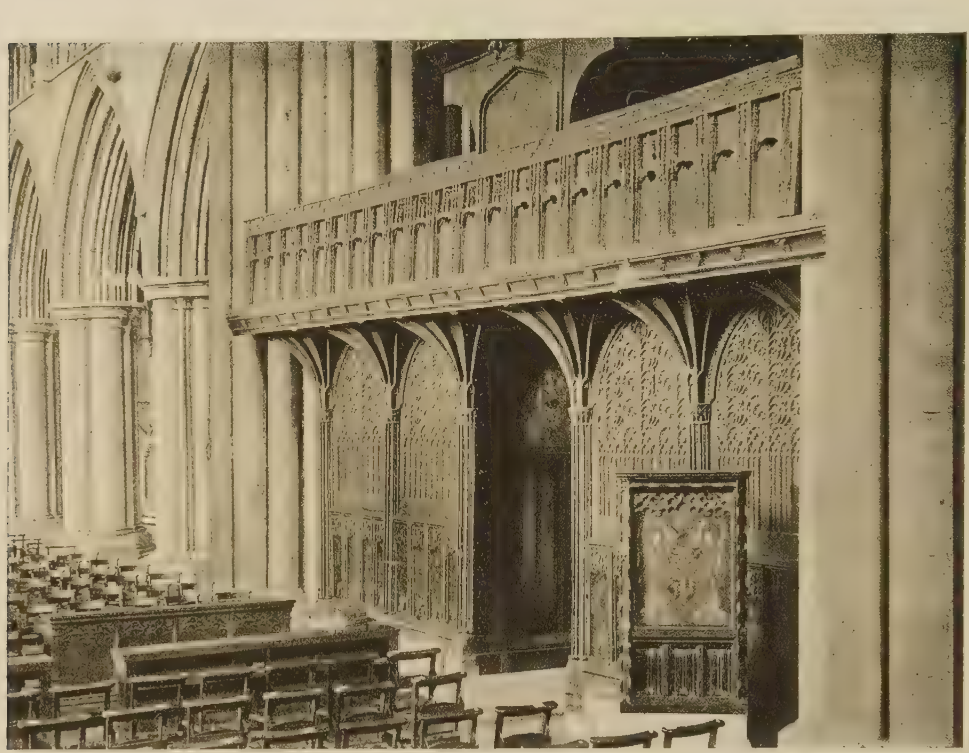
BEVERLEY MINSTER, YORKS., PARCLOSE SCREEN ENCLOSING QUIRE



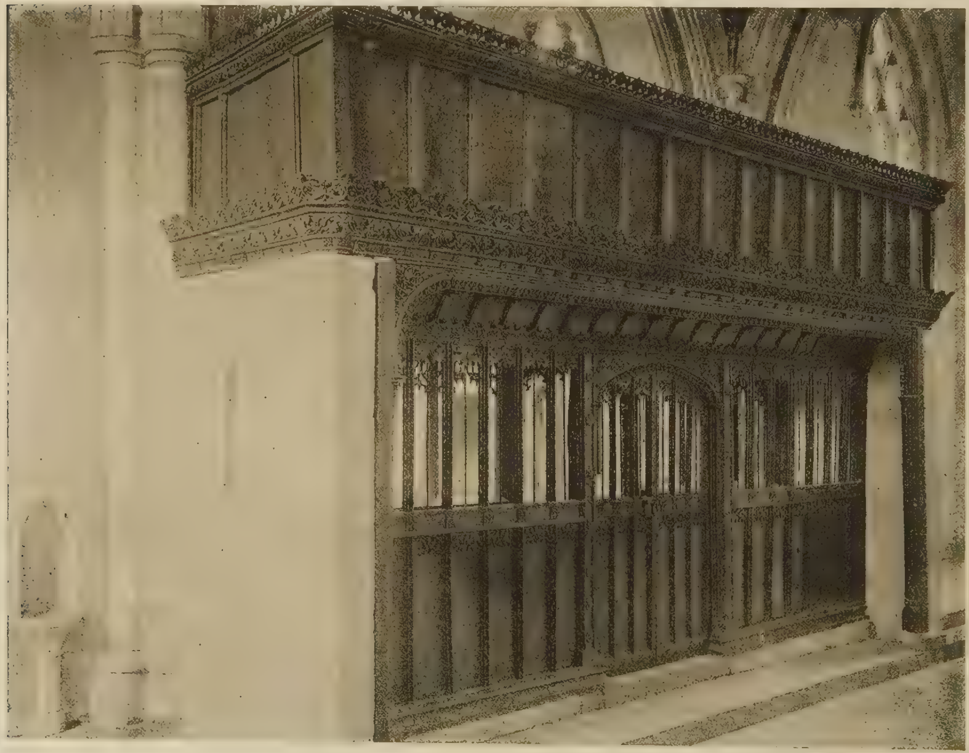
WINTHORPE, LINCS., PARCLOSE IN NORTH AISLE



CIRENCESTER, GLOUCESTERSHIRE, PARCLOSE IN SOUTH AISLE

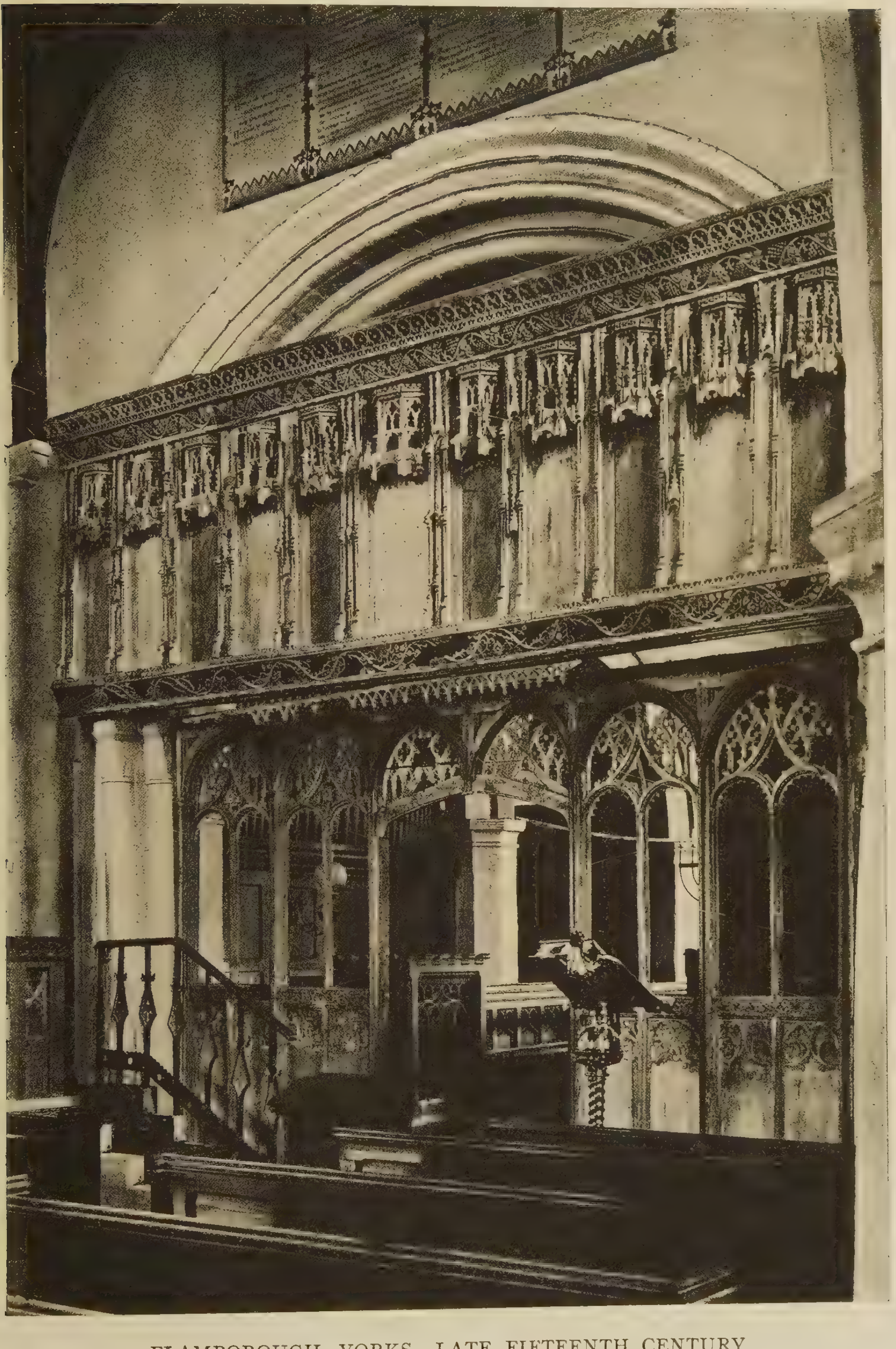


HEXHAM ABBEY CHURCH, WITH SOLID PANELS



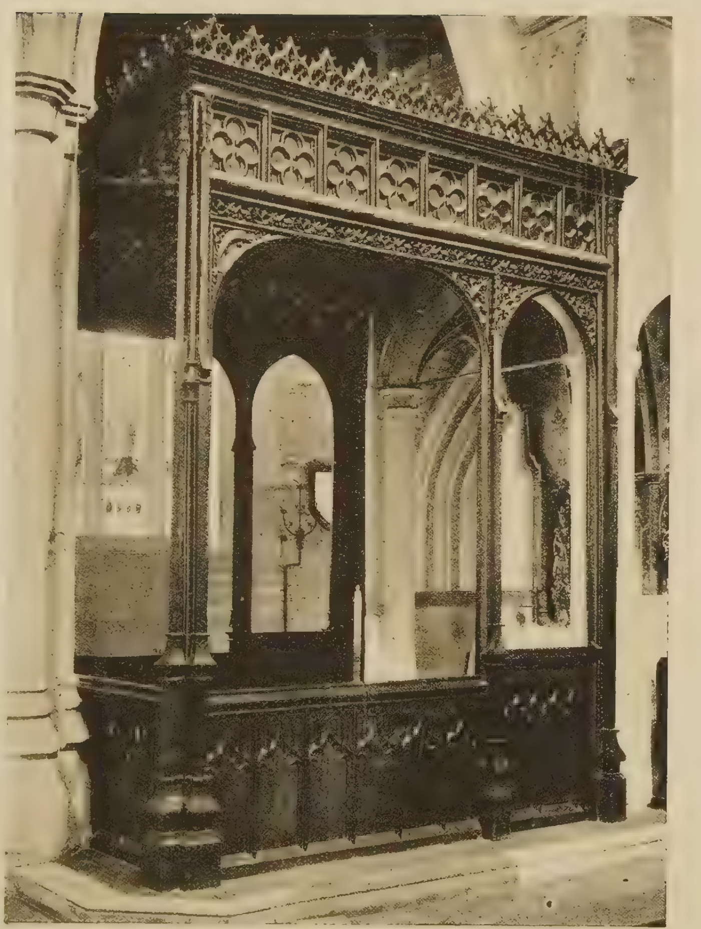
EDINGTON COLLEGIATE CHURCH, WILTS., DOUBLE SCREEN

THE PAROCHIAL ROOD-LOFT—YORKSHIRE TYPE

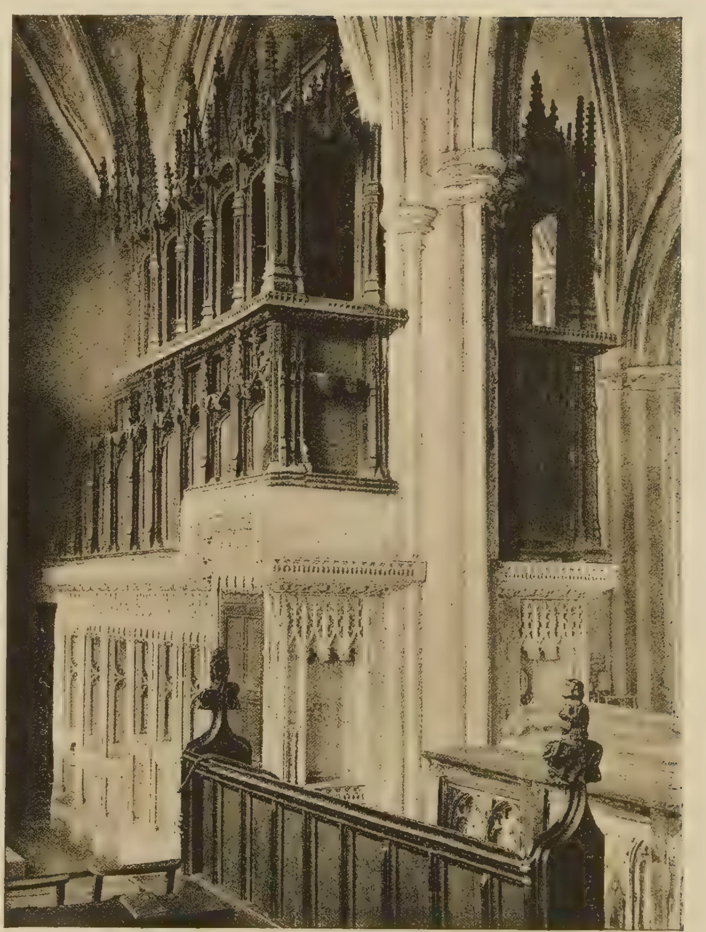


FLAMBOROUGH, YORKS., LATE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

CHANTRY CHAPEL SCREENS



BURFORD, OXON



OXFORD CATHEDRAL

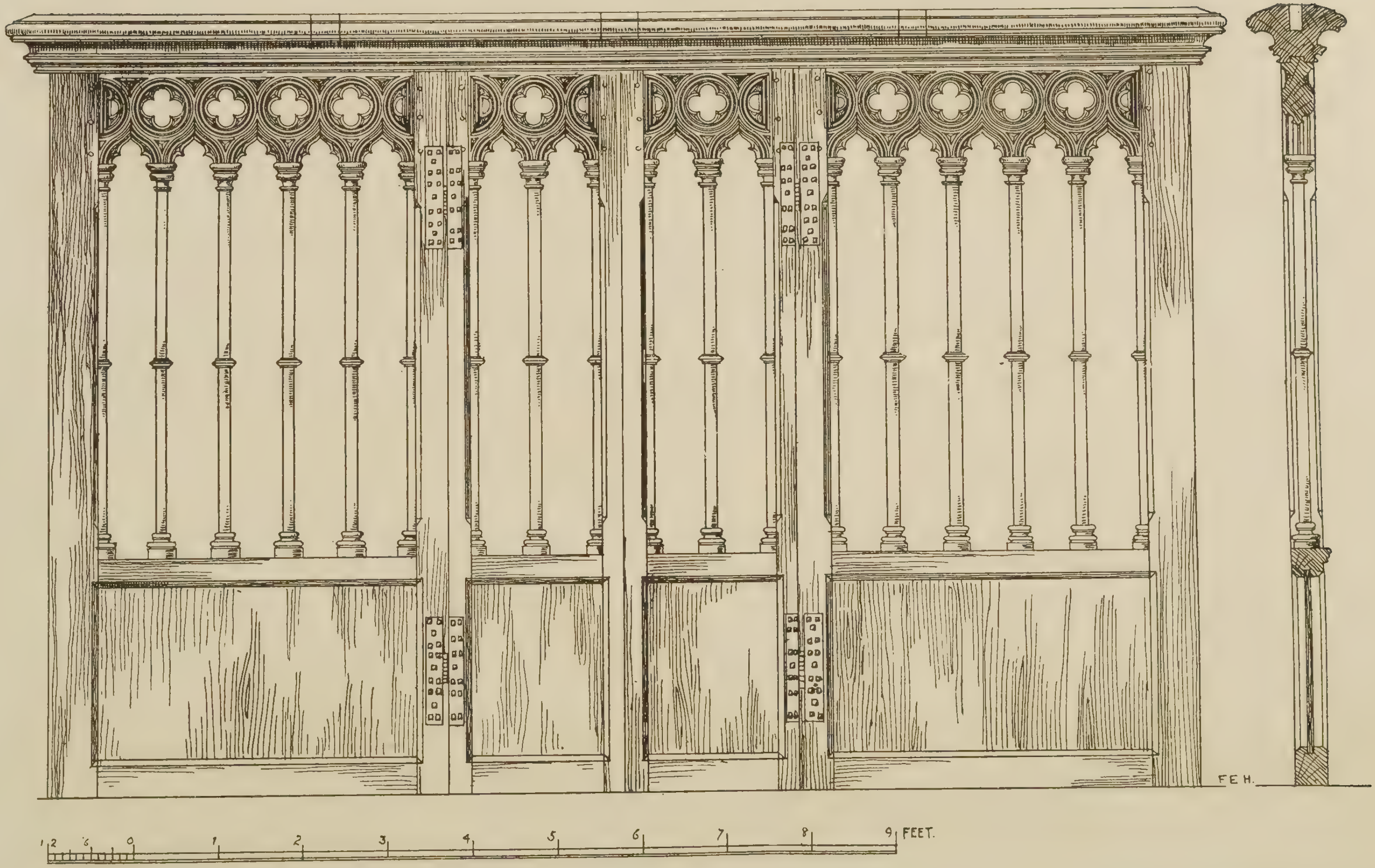
SCREENS, ROODS, AND LOFTS *(Contd.)*

CONSTRUCTION AND DESIGN

Square-Framed Screens.—The earliest form of parochial screen of which there are existing remains consisted of a rectangular framework, composed of a head, sill, two styles, and a pair of jambs, forming a central doorway and two side bays. The latter were divided horizontally by rail about 3 feet 6 inches, or even 4 feet 6 inches, above the floor level. The lower divisions were filled in with boarding, while the upper divisions were subdivided by vertical members framed into the head and the rail, known as muntins. There is a screen of this very primitive type at Pixley, in Herefordshire (249), probably little later in date than the thirteenth-century fabric in which it stands. The design is absolutely reasonable and constructional, but it is severely plain and unattractive.

The wood-workers of the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries made great efforts to improve upon, or rather to disguise, this simple post and beam construction. They branched out on two false tracks, which eventually led them back to their starting-point.

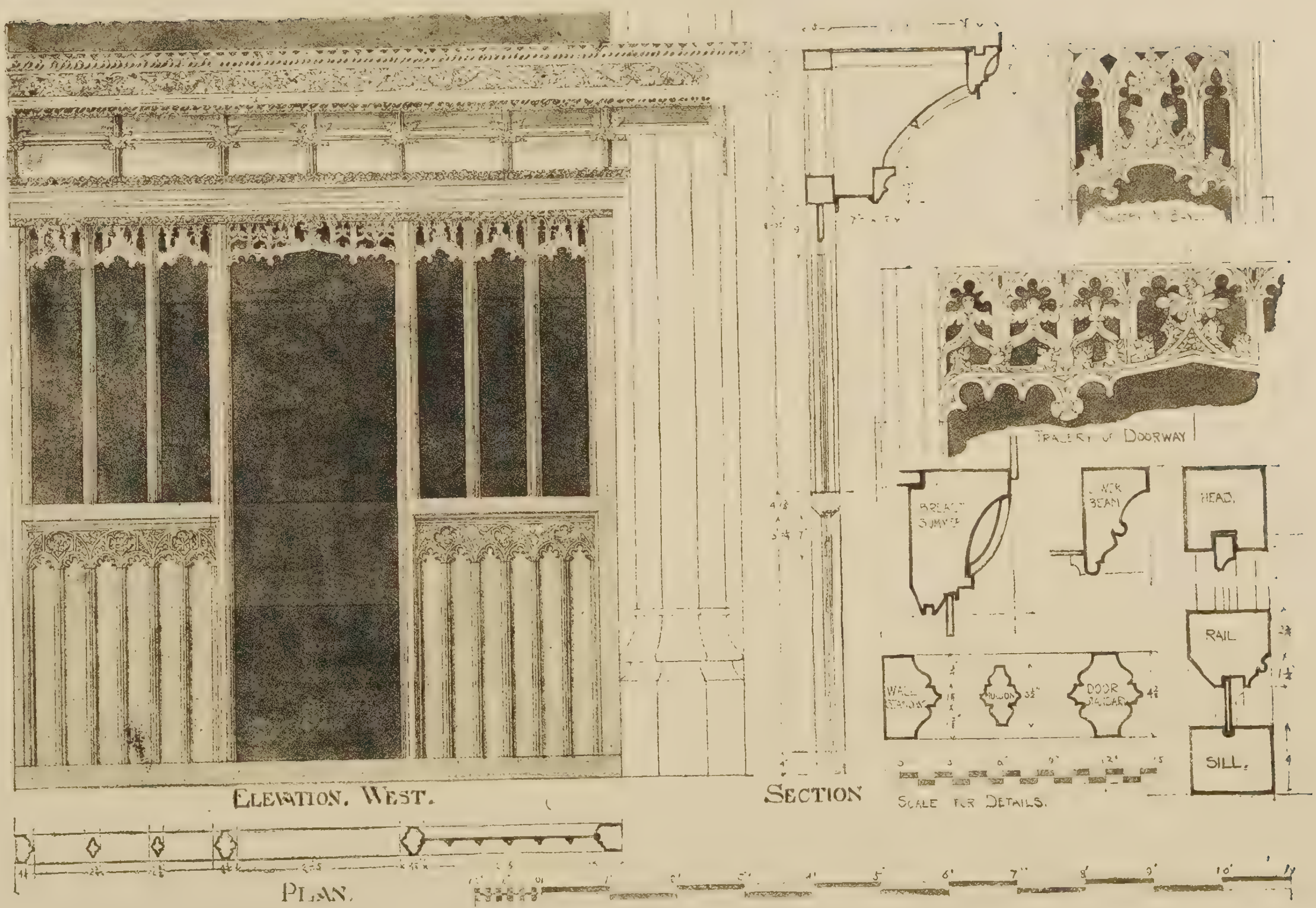
The first of these was to treat the muntins as little shafts with turned capitals, bases, and annulets, a motive directly inspired by stonework, and one not likely to prove a permanent inspiration to the carpenter. At first the shafts were probably tenoned straight into the head, as in the late thirteenth-century screens across the quire aisles at Exeter cathedral, which are of very backward design for their date; but after the middle of the century the incongruous effect of the row of shafts supporting the head beam was generally avoided by framing a thick board, carved into the form of a series of arches, into the head of each side opening. In this case the shafts were



CHINNOR, OXON, THE TURNED SHAFT MOTIVE (*c.* 1310) dowelled to the board, and appeared to support an arcade. This method of construction is employed in the curious wood parapet of the late twelfth century at Compton, Surrey, and was probably an early invention. Here the arches are semicircular, but in the thirteenth-century screens of Gilston, Herts.; Thurcaston, Leicestershire; and Stanton Harcourt, Oxon., they are trefoiled and richly moulded. In the latter instance a two-centered hood-mould is applied to each of the arches. Influenced by contemporary stonework the arcade developed naturally into a band of tracery. Thus, in the late thirteenth-century screen at Northfleet, Kent, the arches are traceried and the spandrels are pierced, while the early fourteenth-century example at Chinnor, Oxon. (226), has regular geometrical tracery, and a few years later curvilinear tracery was evolved, as in the parclose screens of Beverley St Mary (25) and Kirk Ella (25). In the early shafted screens the tracery was very thick and elaborately moulded, and the capitals and bases projected boldly; but as time went on the tracery became deeper, thinner, and less elaborately moulded, while the shaft mouldings were of less projection, as in the mid-fourteenth-century screen of Guilden Morden, Cambs. (249). About this time turned shafts began to go out of fashion. The art of turning declined, judging from the feeble design of the shafts at Cropredy, Oxon., and other mid-fourteenth-century screens, and octagonal cutting was sometimes used instead, as at Thame, Oxon. (25). Eventually turned shafts were discarded in favour of moulded mullions, as in the screens of Wardington, Oxon., and Merton, Norfolk. The next step was to reduce the thickness of the tracery still further, and to increase that of the mullion, forking the latter over the tracery, and tenoning it into the head of the screen like a muntin, as at Handborough (228), to the great advantage of the construction, for the dowelled joint between the shafts and the tracery was a very weak point.

This type of screen with its strong main framing, its closely spaced muntins, and its thin tracery, often so elaborately fretted as to produce the effect of filigree work, may be regarded as the normal English parish church screen of the fifteenth century. It is common all over the country, with the exception of East Anglia and the

SQUARE PANEL SCREEN—MIDLAND TYPE



HANDBOROUGH, OXON, SCREEN IN NORTH AISLE

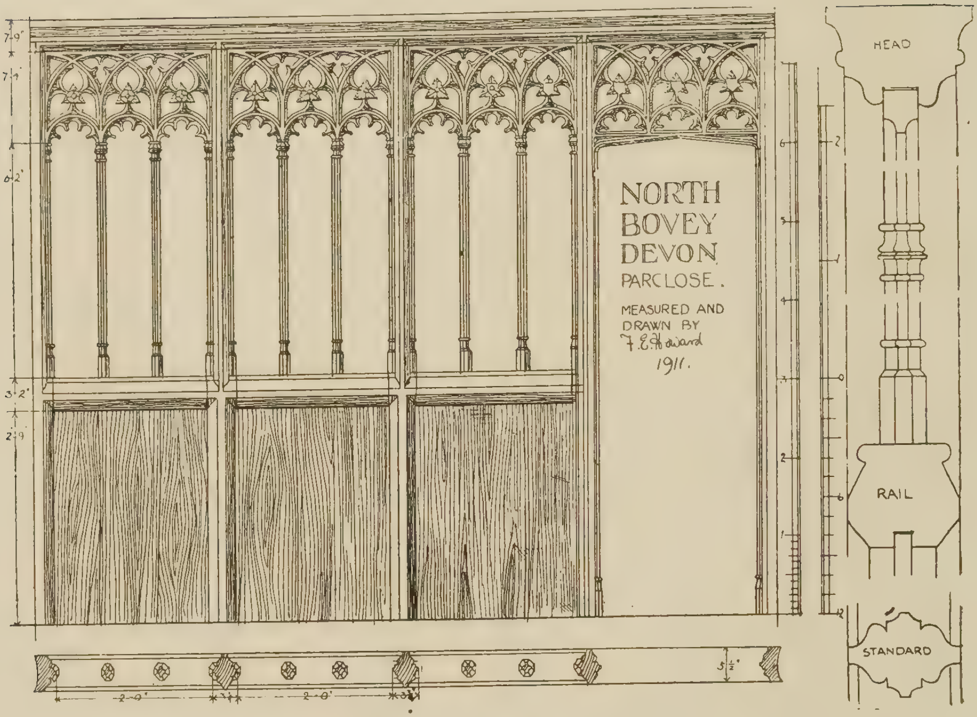
Measured and Drawn by
F. E. Howard, 1912

adjoining counties—Somerset, Devon, and Cornwall– where examples are very scarce.

A development of the type, less common but very widely distributed, is represented by a beautiful group of screens in the north of Somerset and neighbourhood, of which Backwell (250) is the type. In this variety, the origin of which may be traced from the curious design of Thame (25), the muntins are not forked over the tracery, but run through, cutting it into sections. As a consequence the design of the tracery is not limited by the width of the board, as before, since it is carved out of a series of tall panels, instead of a single horizontal band. In the lovely parclose screens at Dunster, Somerset (253), and Walsoken, Norfolk (252), the tracery is actually continued down to the rail. In some late screens of this type there is a tendency to return to the thick moulded tracery of earlier fashion, as in the parclose screen at Marston Morteigne, Bucks., and Kirk Sandall, Yorks. (256). In the latter case the tracery is illogically but very picturesquely decorated with applied canopy work, a treatment also seen at Hitchin, Herts. (252).

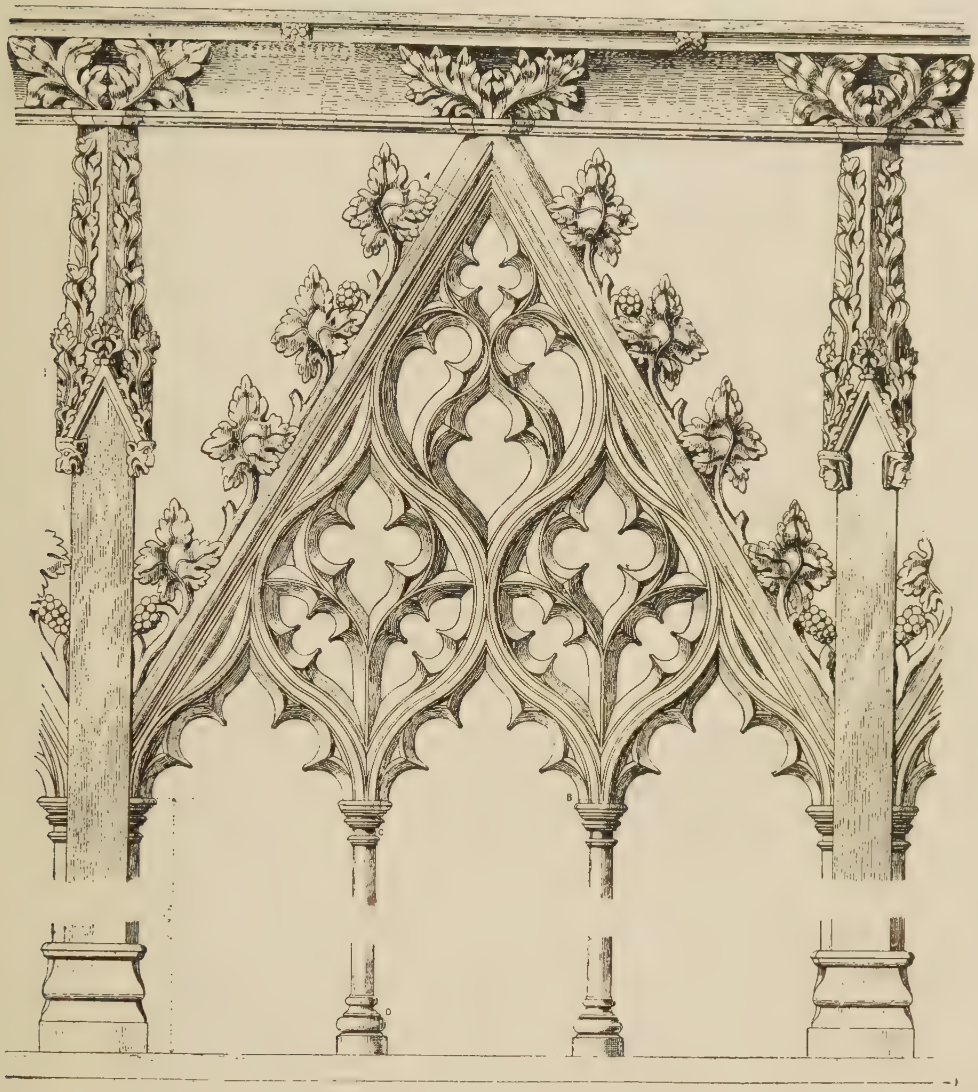
In the counties of Devon and Cornwall, and in the adjoining parts of Somerset, the influence of the shafted screens proved to be more enduring. In the early years of the fifteenth century the turned shafts were abandoned, and for a few years moulded mullions were employed, as at Keynsham (256) and Halberton; but although turning and annulets disappeared for good, the capitals and bases were soon reintroduced in Devon in connection with the moulded mullions, and were retained until the overthrow of mediæval art, as at North Bovey (230).

The other course of development may be traced in the eastern counties. Late in the thirteenth century there was a tendency in that district for the shafts to take upon themselves the form of pinnacles, an equally unsuitable motive, also of masonic origin. At St Mary's Hospital, Chichester, every fourth shaft terminates in a large pinnacle, framed into the head of the screen and cutting the tracery into four light sections. Each bay of the tracery has an applied crocketted pediment, and the spandrels are left open, a curious design, the origin of which is not easily traced. but may be due to the



SQUARE PANEL SCREEN, DEVON TYPE, MID-FIFTEENTH CENTURY

influence of stall canopies. The same motive is employed in the lovely parclose screens of St Margaret's, King's Lynn (*c.* 1310) (231), where the pinnacles run from head to rail, dividing the screens into three-light shafted windows. In one section of this fine screenwork the bays are not subdivided by shafts. A rather more fully developed example of this design is seen in the parclose screens of Dorchester abbey, Oxon. (*c.* 1320), where the vertical members are cut into the form of buttresses without pinnacles, and run right through from sill to head. This was a very important step, since hitherto the rail had run through, cutting the uprights in two, and rendering the screen unfit for carrying a loft without aid from props or from the side walls. There is a screen at Southacre (*c.* 1330) (249) which helps to connect the pinnacled buttress type of screen with the normal East Anglian screen of the fifteenth century. Here the straight-sided gable becomes an ogee arch, while the spandrels are filled in with pierced tracery, but in



Scale $\frac{5}{16}$ in. = 1 ft.

ST MARGARET'S, KING'S LYNN, NORFOLK, THE PINNACLE MOTIVE (*c.* 1340)

J. K. COLLING, *Del.*

other respects the screen is backward, the pinnacles rising from turned shafts, like those of the thirteenth-century Chichester screen. The rood screen at Lavenham, Suffolk (*c.* 1340), marks a further advance. The spandrels indeed are left open, but the true character of the uprights is expressed by vertical mouldings, and the buttress and pinnacle are reduced to a mere appendage of the muntin. The familiar Norfolk type is almost fully developed in the mid-fourteenth-century screen at Grundisburgh, Suffolk (26). It has boldly spaced standards, rising from sill to head, decorated with little pinnacled buttresses and deep tracery, with an applied crocketted ogee arch to each bay, but the details are those of the earlier period. The lines of the tracery are flowing, the cusps are sharply pointed, the foliage is naturalistic, and the mouldings are deeply undercut in a manner better suited to stonework. Towards the end of the century these peculiarities died out, and the normal fifteenth-century type was achieved; Dennington (272) and Burgh (254) are good examples.

Two fifteenth-century varieties of this type may be noted. In Yorkshire it is occasionally found that the crocketted ogee arches are traceried, instead of cusped, as at Flamborough (223). The other variation is the grouping of the bays into pairs, either by making the alternate standards thicker, or by omitting alternate standards, as at Dennington (272).

The two-light version of the normal eastern county type, of which Soham (47) is a good example, can be traced from the three-light pinnacle screens at St Margaret's, King's Lynn (231). At Watlington, Norfolk, a few years later, where the pinnacles are true standards, rising from sill to the head, each bay is divided into two lights by a single turned shaft, and the chief member of the tracery is a pair of pointed arches grouped under an ogee, while the spandrels above are traceried. It is a short step from this example to the beautiful early fifteenth-century screen at Soham (47), where the shaft becomes a mullion and the detail is of the period. This motive is very general in the screens of Lincolnshire. In Yorkshire it was sometimes elaborated, as in the beautiful parclose screen at Hull (257), where the sub-arches are traceried, and in the still richer screenwork at Wensley each sub-arch has a little crocketted ogee of its own, planted on the tracery beneath it. The elaboration of tracery, both in line and in subordination, could go no further.

Yet one more effect of the pinnacled screen remains to be noted. In a few isolated instances the vertical members are treated with such elaboration that the head of the screen loses its importance, and is sometimes abandoned altogether. Examples of this curious development are the grand late fourteenth-century screens enclosing the quire of Beverley minster (220) and the early sixteenth-century enclosures of the Lavenham chantry chapels.

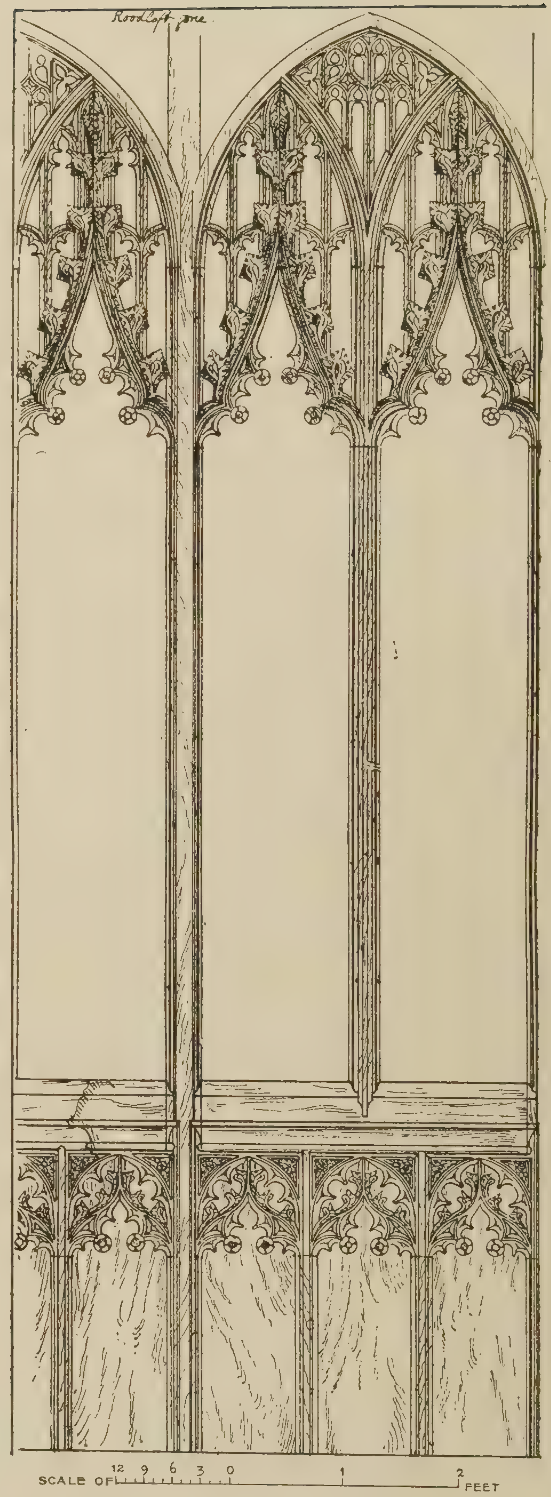
While there was a tendency towards elaboration in the north-eastern counties, the normal East Anglian screen was usually simplified in the adjoining counties of Lincoln, Northants, Cambs., Herts., and Essex; the wide and deep tracery was retained, but the crocketted ogee was often omitted, as at Teversham, Cambs., and Addlethorpe, Lincs. On the other hand, the Midland type with vertical tracery panels was sometimes affected by East Anglian influence; at Higham Ferrers (251), Northants, Fairford and Cirencester, Glos., and in St George's chapel at Windsor, ogee arches are applied to the tracery of the narrow bays usual in those districts.

In Wales and the eastern counties the shafted and the pinnacled types of screen never found favour. The Pixley (249) screen appears to have developed directly into a modified form of Midland type, in which the muntins are rather more widely spaced, and the tracery somewhat elaborate, as at Llananno (42) and Llanwnog (269), and Blore Ray, Staffs. (251). Though both methods of constructing the tracery were employed, separate panels were preferred to a continuous board. In the course of time standards were introduced, dividing the screen into bays, and towards the end of the fifteenth century the muntins between the standards were omitted, as in the very typical Welsh screen at Llanegryn, Merionethshire.

Arched Types.—There are no examples of arched or vaulted screens of an earlier date than the end of the fourteenth century. The use of the arch in the framework was probably derived from stone sources, but it is not unsuited for woodwork. Curved timbers were as easily obtained as straight in the Middle Ages, and the arches served as braces to prevent the racking and deformation to which the rectangular framework was prone. Practically all arcaded screens were intended to carry lofts, so it is possible that the introduction of the device was not altogether due to artistic reasons.

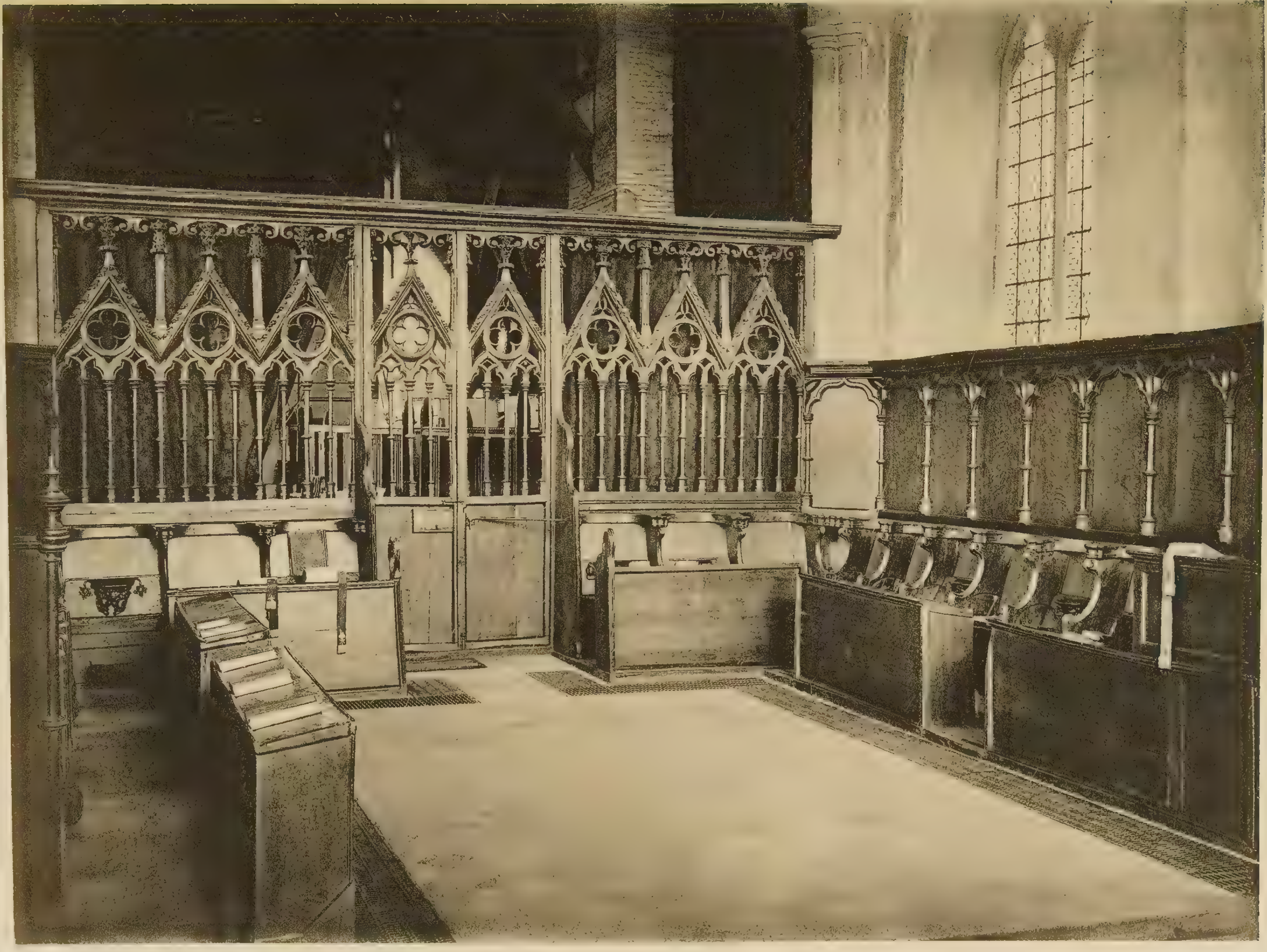
The gradual change from the square-framed to the arcaded type can be easily traced in most parts of the country. First the arcaded motive is introduced into the tracery, then the spandrels over the arch are left solid and decorated with carving, and in some cases the arch is emphasised by the addition of a moulded member. The next step is the bringing down of the rood-loft coving so as to hide the spandrels, so that the former takes the shape of a groined vault. This results in the linking up of the design of the loft and the screen, which had been practically independent hitherto. In the case of a vaulted screen the arch was frequently a real member of the framing, instead of a mere applied moulding, particularly in the West of England.

It is a very striking fact that every square - framed type has its corresponding arcaded version. Though arcaded screens are a later development from square-framed screens, both types may be found side by side



ADDLETHORPE, LINCS., TWO-LIGHT LINCOLN TYPE

H. Vaughan, *Del.*



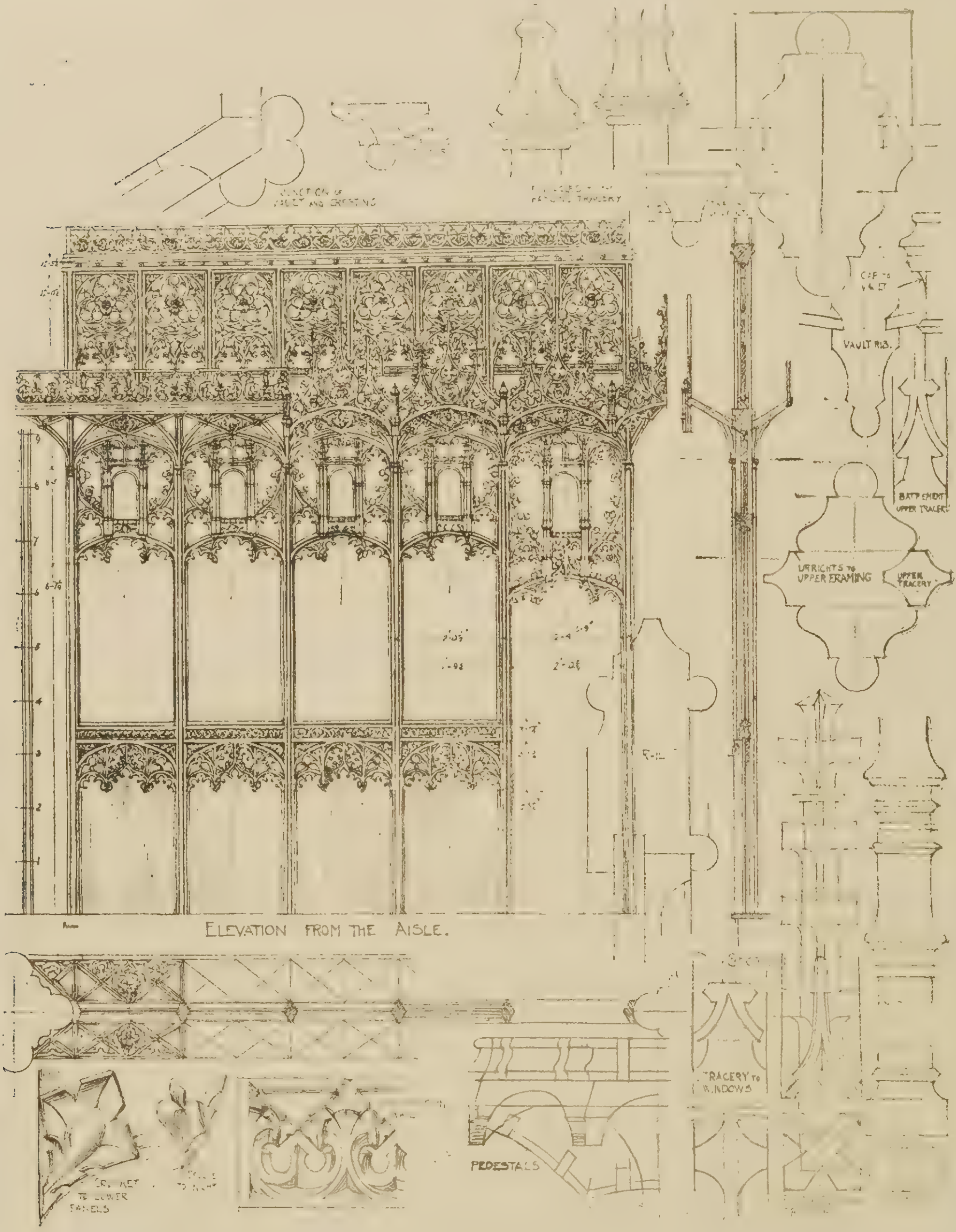
CHAPEL OF ST. MARY'S HOSPITAL, CHICHESTER.
14TH CENTURY SCREEN WORK.

in practically all districts. Arcaded screens are rarer than square-framed screens in most counties. Devon and Cornwall are striking exceptions, for in these counties practically all rood screens are of the arcaded type. They are uncommon in the Midland district, but very widely distributed; practically every county retains a few examples. In the eastern counties square-framed and arched screens occur in nearly equal numbers, but there is reason to suppose that the arched screen was gradually ousting the earlier type. The arched form was very rarely extended to parclose screens. The chief exceptions are the lovely screens enclosing the quires at Southwold (260) and Wingfield, Suffolk (260), and St John's, Stamford.

The invention of the arcaded screen, and the consequent elaboration of the rood-loft soffit, led to a very startling result towards the end of the fifteenth century, for the beauty of the vaulting was so striking as to throw that of the tracery entirely in the shade, and the latter was consequently omitted. While the tracery of the square-framed parclose screens tended to grow deeper and more and more intricate, that of the arched rood screens grew less and less important. In a large group of East Anglian screens, of which Southwold may be regarded as the type, the tracery is wholly omitted, save for a mere fringe of cusping around the arches. Similarly in Cornwall all the tracery and mullions were sometimes left out, and the vaulting was even allowed to hide the arched framework, as at Mawgan. The same process may be noted at Mobberley (263), in Cheshire, where even the fringe of cusps is only represented by a band of tracery carved on the framing. There are other examples of the same character at Campsall and Hatfield, Yorks. The step was occasionally taken in the conservative Midlands, as at Monk's Risborough, Bucks.

On the other hand, there is a tendency to replace the tracery in the early years of the sixteenth century. For instance, the group of Norfolk screens, of which Cawston may be regarded as the type, is distinguished by a free-standing trefoiled ogee arch in each light, very beautifully cusped and crocketted. And Yaxley and Sibton, Suffolk (261), are late versions of the normal arched East Anglian screen in which the tracery is of exceptional depth and elaboration. Lincolnshire

SUFFOLK TYPE OF ARCHED SCREEN, EARLY XVIth CENTURY



SOUTHWOLD, SUFFOLK, SCREEN BETWEEN QUIRE AND SOUTH AISLE

Measured and Drawn by F. E. Howard

also abounds in arcaded screens with very deep and elaborate tracery, some in single-light bays, like Fishtoft, others in two-lights, as at Addlethorpe. The latter type is usual in Yorkshire.

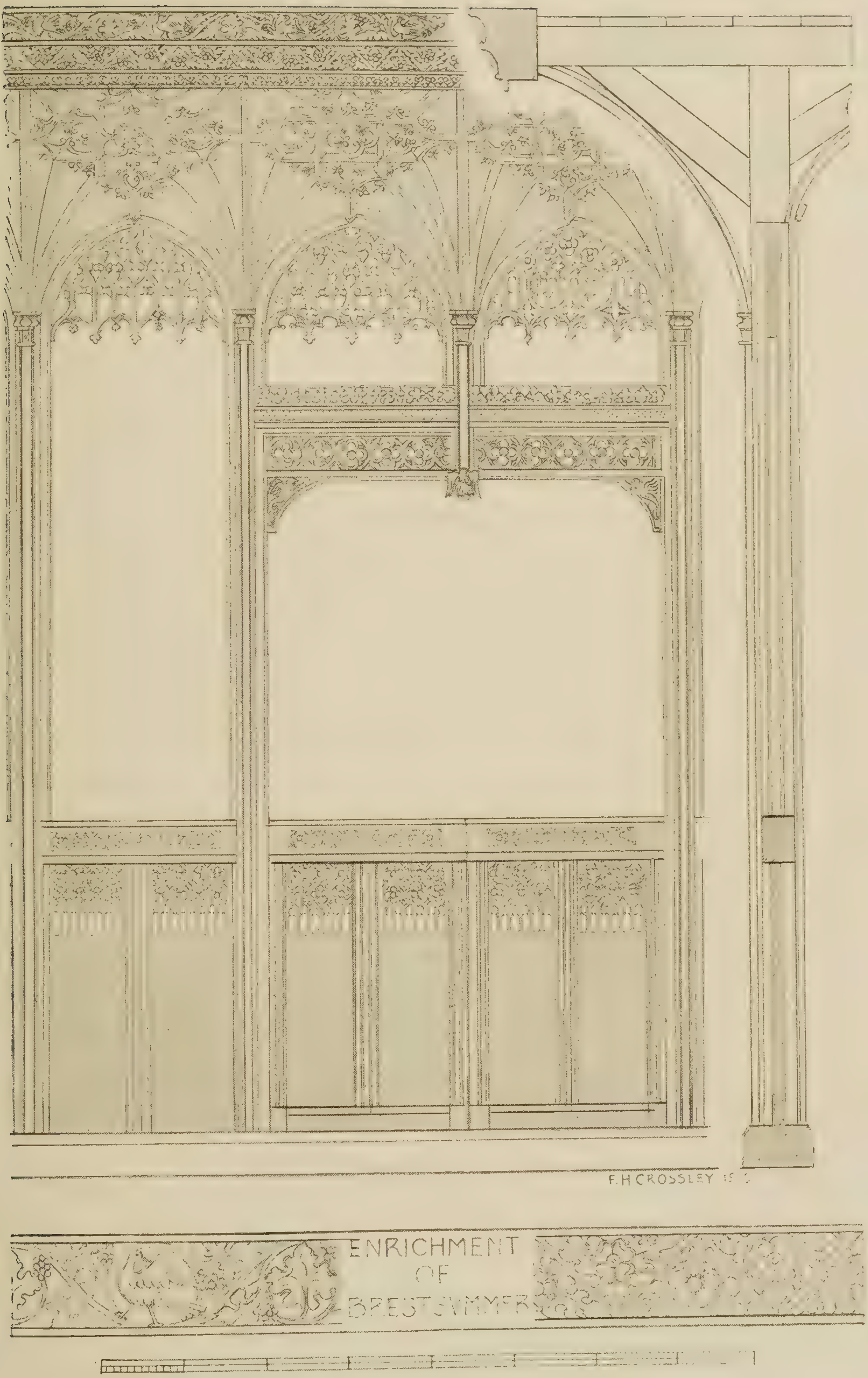
The Wainscot.—The design of the wainscot below the rail alters the general effect very little. When the rail ran through, as in most of the earlier screens, the treatment was generally entirely distinct from that of the openings. In the oldest examples the framework below the rail was simply filled in with boarding. The boards were always very wide and roughly cut, slightly feather-edged, and jointed with a curious V-shaped tongue. In the mid-fourteenth century the panelling was sometimes decorated with applied tracery like that of the openings, as in the screenwork at Guilden Morden, Cambs. In the later screens, muntins were usually introduced to strengthen the panels, which were sometimes traceried at the head, or carved with foliage or tracery, or linen-fold patterns. The muntins do not always correspond exactly with the upper range.

When the vertical members of the framing run right through to the sill, the wainscot is naturally divided into bays corresponding with the openings. In this case each panel was generally subdivided by an applied mullion or a muntin, and was treated in any of the ways already enumerated.

The panels of the wainscot are often provided with a traceried plinth. This is rarely omitted in the south-western counties and in East Anglia, but it is not often used elsewhere, save in the south-eastern counties, where a deep moulded plinth, without tracery, is also commonly found. Much ornament was lavished upon the wainscot in East Anglia, where admirable painted decoration is employed, and in Devon. The wainscots of the later screens of Devon and Cornwall are often covered with relief carving.

The Loft.—The oldest lofts were supported partly on the head of the screen and partly by a second beam, usually known as the bressummer, fixed at the same level, but a few feet westward. The joists carrying the floor were framed in between these two beams, and the horizontal soffit was generally boarded and panelled out with moulded ribs and bosses. The effect of this arrangement is rather heavy and unattractive; Derwen (268) is one of the most perfect examples. A lighter and more graceful appearance was produced by constructing the loft floor at a higher level than the head of the screen, linking up the loft and screen by a panelled or vaulted coving. In this case it was necessary to fix a beam over the head of the screen, from which it was sometimes supported by a series of puncheons. The main standards were often run through to this beam, as at Handborough (39), cutting the real head of the screen into sections. In the late arched screens of East Anglia the horizontal member is far above the apex of the arches. Naturally, when a very wide loft was required, these methods were sometimes applied on both sides of the screen, but when the loft projected eastward as well as westward, the joists were more often notched over the head of the screen and acted as cantilevers, while the bressummers became mere curbs or trimmers, hiding their end, as at Astbury (239). In the first type the loft is chiefly carried by the bressummers, in the second it is supported by the screen. As a consequence it is found that in Devon and East Anglia, where the second method was preferred, the framework of the screen is generally very massive, while in the rest of the country other methods were adopted to guard against the sagging of the bressummers. For instance, brackets were framed into the main uprights of the screen, tongued into the joists, which were tenoned into the bressummer, thus relieving it of a certain proportion of the load. The ends of the bressummer were generally built into the side wall or carried on posts. In either case the span of the beam was sometimes reduced by the use of arched braces, as at Christian Malford (250) and Edington (222), or in some instances the span is divided into sections by the use of posts, as at Llanwnog (269). The latter is a very beautiful and picturesque arrangement, for the posts, which were often decorated with tabernacle work, together with the panelled soffit of the rood-loft, formed delightful canopies for the two side altars that were so often placed against the screen on each side of the chancel doorway. Occasionally this principle appears to have been extended, and a second screen was constructed under the bressummer, an arrangement, however, of which there is no existing example, if the Guilden Morden screen (249) be excepted. In this remarkable instance it is doubtful whether the double screen was intended primarily to enclose the side altars or to carry a loft.

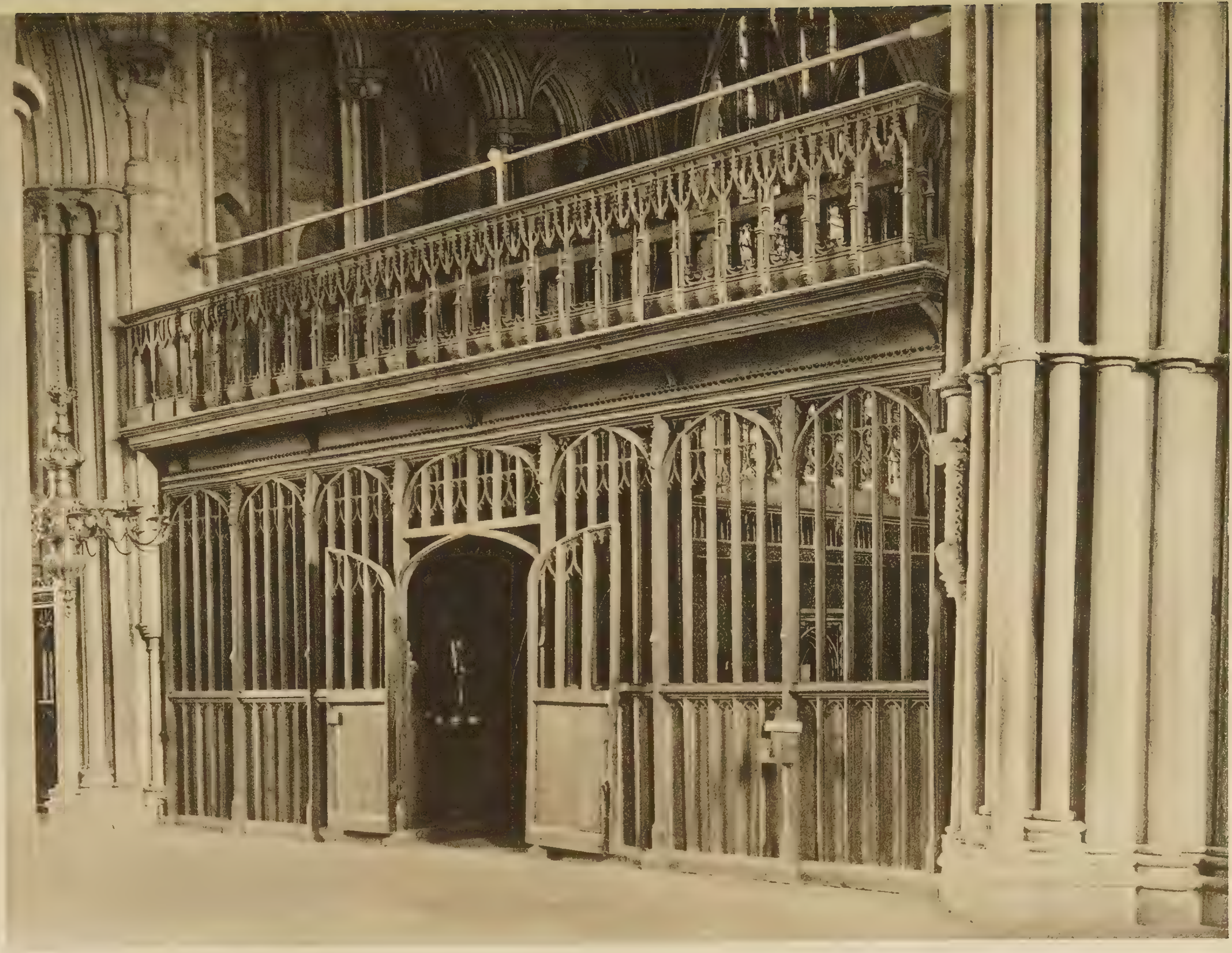
The beautiful vaultings of the later screens were a development



CHESHIRE TYPE OF ARCHED SCREEN, ASTBURY (*c* 1500) of the simple boarded and panelled soffits of the early rood-lofts. The building of the loft at a higher level than the screen, an almost invariable feature of the rood-loft screens of the second half of the fifteenth century, seems to have been devised for the better display of this charming work. When this method of construction was employed the boarding was carried on a series of ribs, sometimes straight, but more often shaped to a curve struck from one or two centres. The curve is generally rather flat, as at Handborough (228), but in some examples it is very pronounced, as at Llaneilian (268); generally the flat curve has the best effect. This type of continuous coving continued to be used to the end, and was often greatly elaborated. At Keynsham, Somerset, each of the panels is decorated with a great rayed star, while in Wales and Cheshire a gorgeous effect was sometimes obtained by fretting the panels into tracery, as at Llananno, Radnorshire (30), (42), (264).

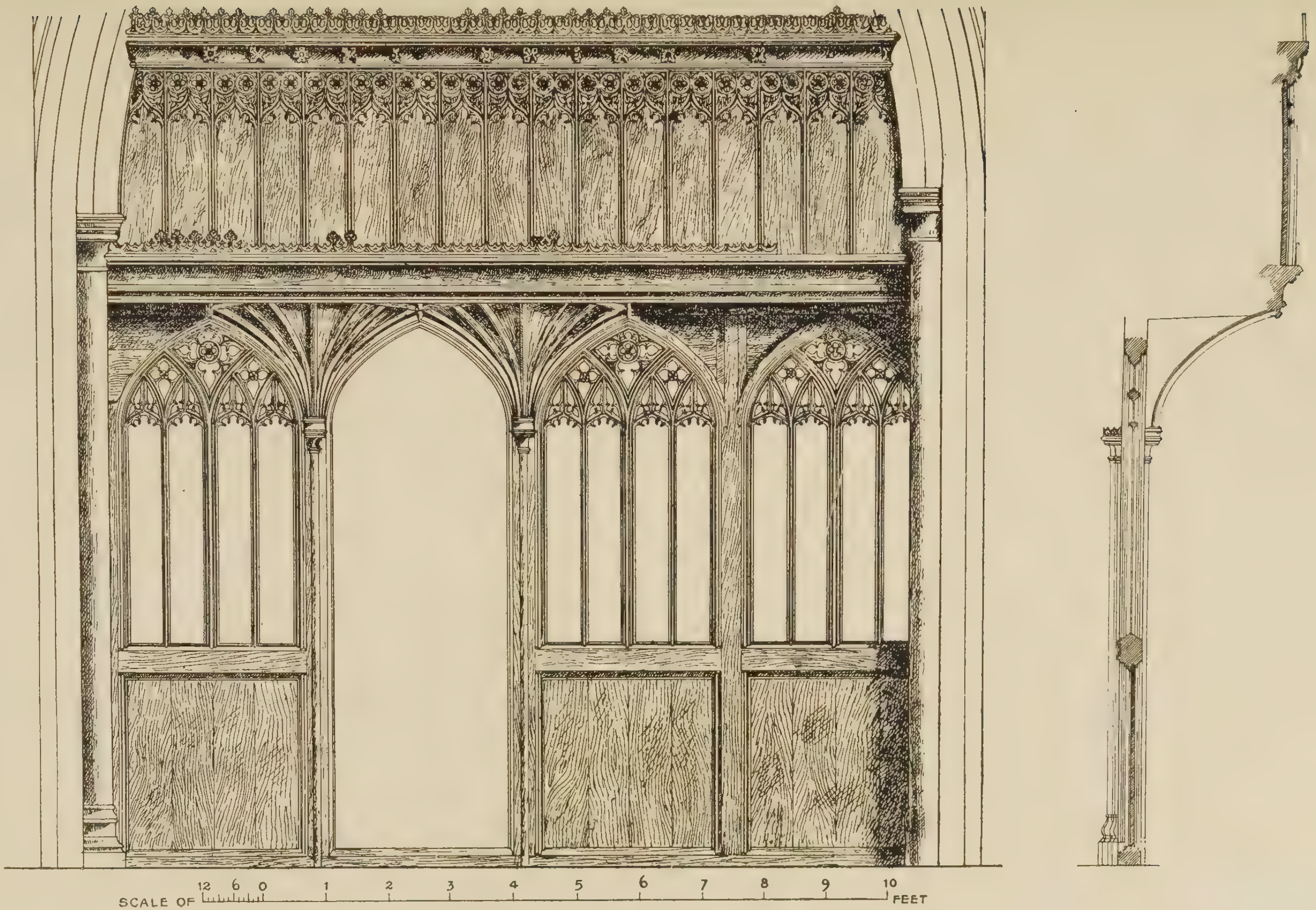
The vaulted covings seem to have been devised to suit the arcaded screens, and to connect and dovetail the design of the screen and loft into one harmonious composition. They include some of the most fascinating work in the whole of Gothic art. The oldest examples have rather stout moulded ribs with plain panels, and are designed on the simple lines of a stone vault with intermediate ribs. The decoration of the panels with sunk tracery, as at Ashby St Ledgers (258), Plymtree (259), and Dunster (265), giving the effect of a fan vault, was an early improvement, almost unknown in the eastern counties, while the carving of foliage in this position is also a western characteristic, exemplified by the screens of Poltimore (265), Lapford, and Atherington (271). Lierne ribs were often employed in all parts of the country, and many charming patterns were produced, as at Attleborough (266). In some East Anglian screens charming results were obtained by cusping the star-like panels at the crown of the vault, as at Newark (266) and Bramfield (266). Similar vaults occur in the Welsh district, as at Gresford, Astbury (239), and Aymestrey (264). True fan vaults are employed at Edlesborough, Bucks., and at Dilwyn and Bosbury, Herefordshire. The effect is not very good, as there is no tilt; Fitzhead, Somerset, has tilted fans.

In the majority of cases the vault was a series of half bays, but



WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL, SCREEN TO LADY CHAPEL. DATE ABOUT 1524.

THE ARCHED SCREEN—MIDLAND TYPE



WARFIELD, BERKS., PANELLED ROOD-LOFT FRONT

C. E. POWELL, *Del.*

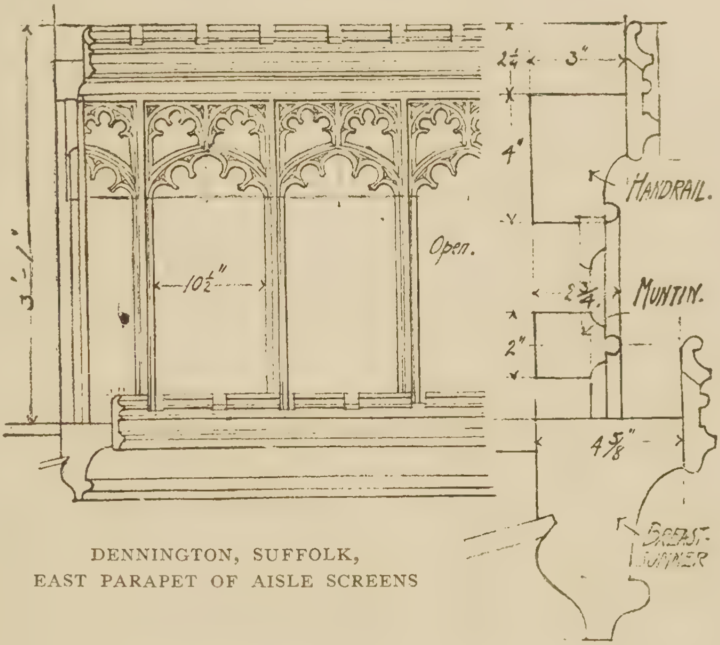
towards the end of the fifteenth century whole bays were often employed, especially in East Anglia. In this case the vault was tilted up in front and hung down in a series of pendants. The effect is remarkably beautiful. In a number of East Anglian screens this motive was still further developed. At Attleborough (246) a further series of half bays of vaulting was applied to the west side of the rood-loft panels, so that each bay of the screen corresponds with a bay and a half of the vault, and at Ranworth there was a similar arrangement under the rood-loft soffit.

There was no necessity to apply the same treatment to the coving on both sides of the screen. At Gresford (167) and Astbury (239) the west side is vaulted and the eastern side has coving. At Happisburgh the west side of the screen was prepared for vaulting, while the eastern half of the loft seems to have had a flat soffit. In East Anglian screens with the remarkable pendant vaulting, described above, the eastern vault is usually in a series of very steeply tilted half bays.

The mortices into which the rood with the figures of Our Lady and St John were fixed sometimes remain in the hand-rail, together with a series of circular holes into which tapers were once fitted. When they do not occur the rood was probably supported on a special rood beam, spanning the church about six feet above the floor of the loft. Occasionally the mortices can be traced in the head of the screen or the front bressummer of the loft.

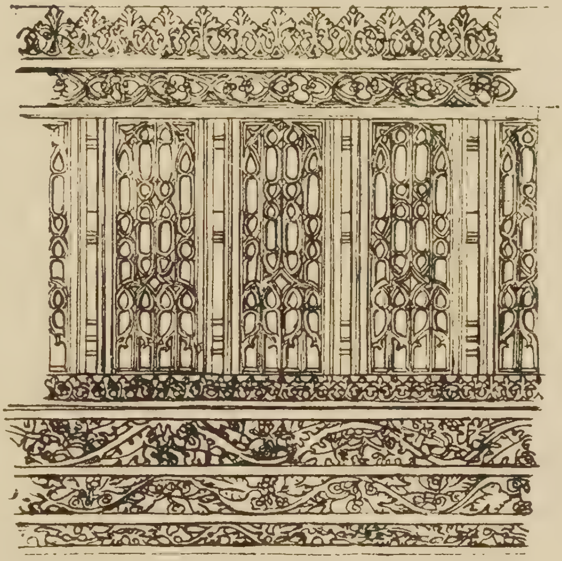
A few lofts have pulpit-like projections over the quire doorways, either facing west, as at Cotes-by-Stow, and Sleaford, or facing east, as at Montgomery, Newark, and Dunster (265). At Cotes the projection is external only, and appears to have been a mere base for the rood, but when the eastward pulpit occurs in churches of cathedral or monastic rank, or even in collegiate churches, it seems likely that it was used for the reading of the gospel, etc., on festivals. Splendid examples may be seen at Chester and in most of the other northern quires with tabernacled stalls. In some cases the projection may have been intended to provide additional space in the loft for an altar or an organ.

The panellings forming the front and back parapets of the loft have only survived in comparatively few cases, but there is sufficient evidence to show how charming and varied was their design.



DENNINGTON, SUFFOLK, EAST PARAPET OF AISLE SCREENS

The simplest of all are those with moulded uprights and plain panels, as at Edington (222). This method was frequently employed in the eastern parapet, as at Llananno (42). At Llanwnog (269) the panels are pierced with the typical Welsh gratings, while at Patricio (243), Llangwm, Hubberholme, and Bettws Newydd the whole of each panel is elaborately pierced and traceried. At Marwood and Llanengan the eastern parapets are



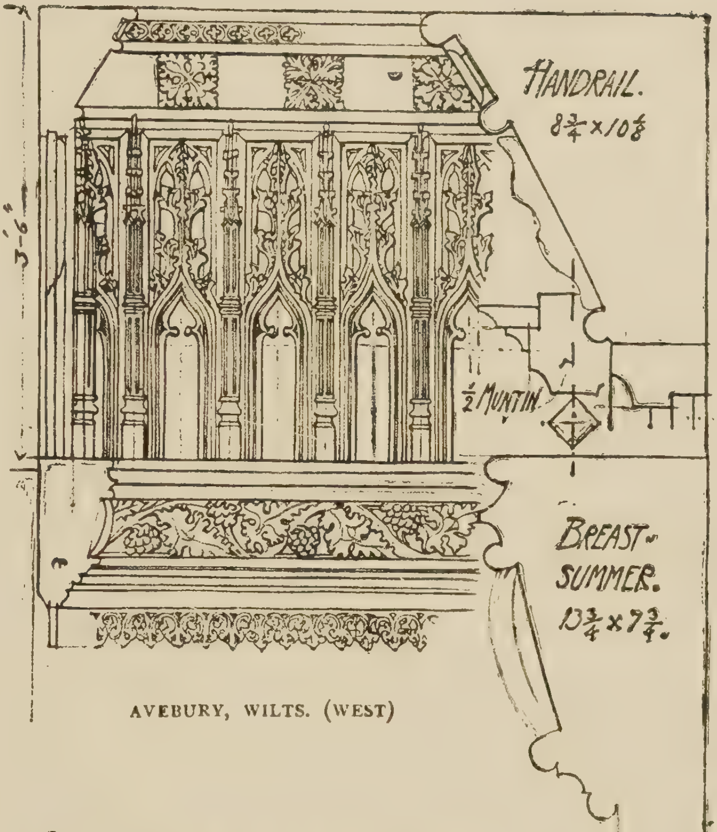
PATRICIO, BRECON

decorated with foliage and scrolls carved in relief. A curious treatment occurs in two Worcestershire rood-lofts, Besford and Leigh, which have very low parapets, with horizontal panels pierced with quatrefoils. The eastern front of the loft at Atherington is constructed in true Devonshire fashion with horizontal boarding instead of panelling, decorated with applied mullions and tracery. Sometimes the panels are open, as at Llaneilian (268), where the loft front consists of a series of moulded uprights supporting a hand-rail, and at Derwen (268) and the eastern parapet of Dennington (272), where there are traceried heads to the openings. An elaborate version occurs in the Lady chapel screen at Winchester, where each head is enriched with a pair of crocketted ogee arches and a pinnacle, giving the effect of tabernacle work, while the uprights are reinforced with elaborate pierced buttresses. Another ornate variety is seen in the west parapet at Dennington and Oakley (273), where each bay is divided into two lights, grouped under a crocketted ogee arch. The front of the loft at Warfield, Berks. (241), is of the same general design as that of Derwen, but it is panelled.

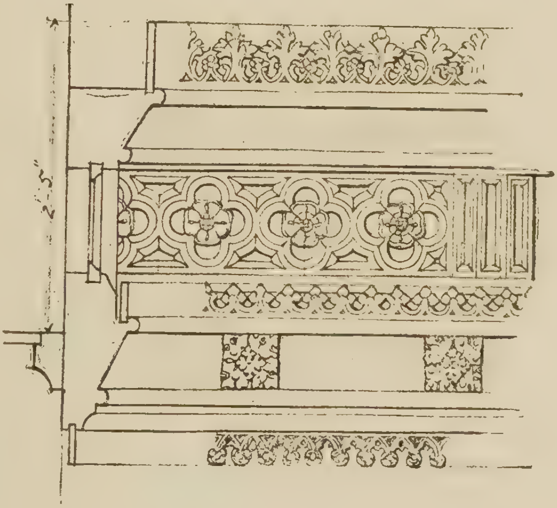
The most elaborate lofts were decorated with gorgeous nichework, as at Hexham (222), Flamborough (223), Llanrwst (270), and Atherington (271). There are two main varieties, those with a series of equal niches separated by narrow uprights, as at Llananno (42), or with wide and narrow niches alternately, as at Atherington (271), and those with large niches in the panels, and one or two small niches on the muntins, as at Flamborough and Llanrwst.

These are the different varieties of the types of loft common to most parts of the country. Naturally there is infinite variation in the character of the detail, which follows the local mannerisms.

The kind of loft front adopted in many of the arched screens of East Anglia was rather different. The evidence for the design of the rood-loft front in this district is rather scanty. The mutilated screens of Southwold, Eye, and Stamford St John retain puzzling fragments of their destroyed lofts, and the fortunate survival of the admirable front of Attleborough (273) throws light upon this perplexing problem. The majority of the arched screens of Norfolk, Suffolk, and the neighbouring counties were vaulted in complete instead of half bays, rising from the standards and falling down in pendants. Such a vaulting, seen from the front, presents a series of arches, which cannot be masked by the usual bressummer. The panels, therefore, pass down in front of the bressummer, and their lower ends are arched, and sometimes cusped at the bottom to suit the front arches of the vault. These panels were generally pierced and traceried, at least in the upper part.

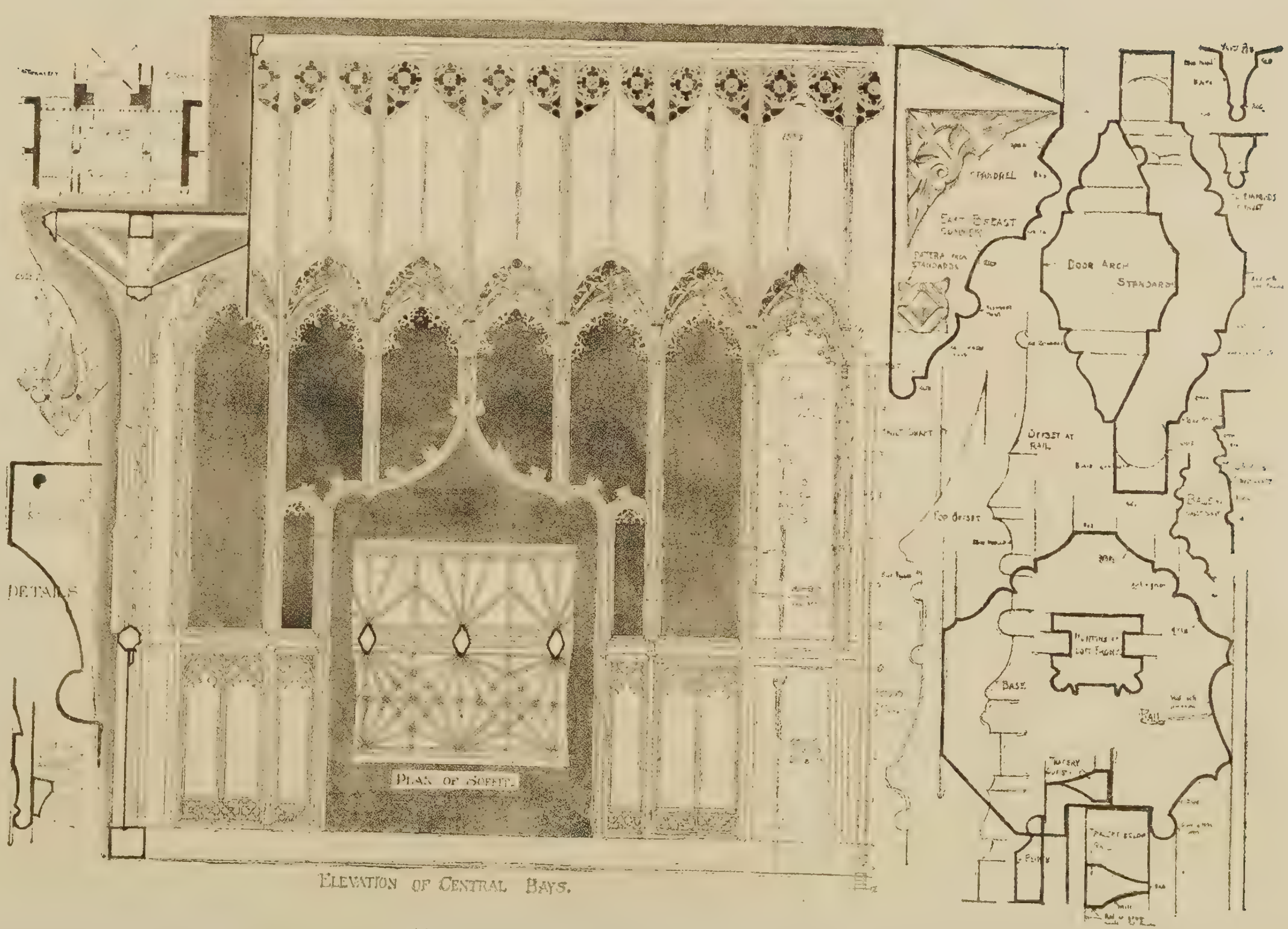


AVEBURY, WILTS. (WEST)



LEIGH, WORCS. (WEST)

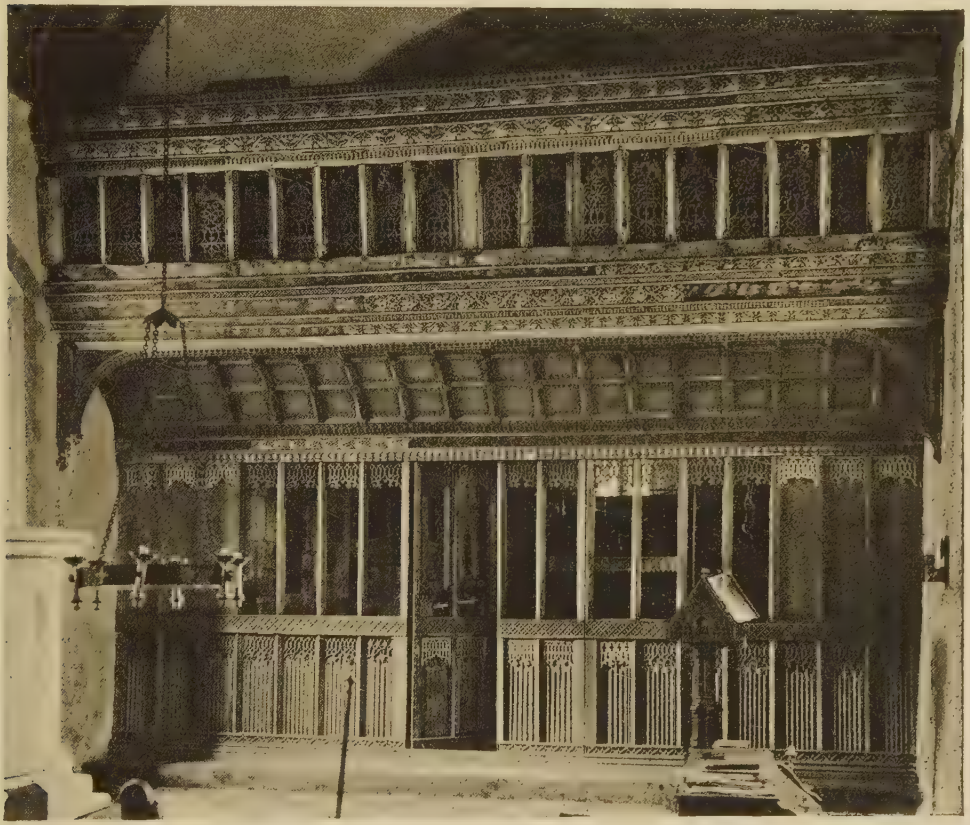
At Southwold (262)



ATTLEBOROUGH, NORFOLK, ROOD-LOFT

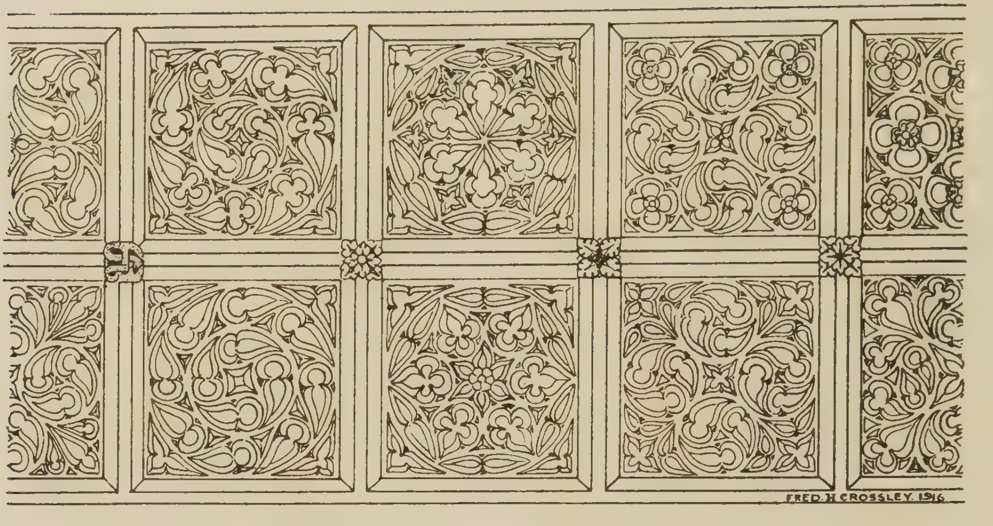
Measured and Drawn by
F. E. Howard

and Eye (262) the valuable fragments now attached to the head of the screens suggest that the loft front was itself vaulted, two bays corresponding with each bay of the screen below, forming a lovely cornice to the whole composition. At Attleborough (246) there are distinct traces of a series of half bays of vaulting attached to the arches at the base of the panels of the front, which were probably masked by elaborate crocketted ogee tracery, similar to that of the magnificent side screens of Southwold (236, 260). This pendant construction was not adopted in the eastern side of the loft, but there is practically no evidence to show what was the character of the eastern parapets. It occurs in Wales in the fine screen of Montgomery (270), where the design is not dictated by practical considerations, since the soffit of the loft, which is lost, has never been more than a flat coving.



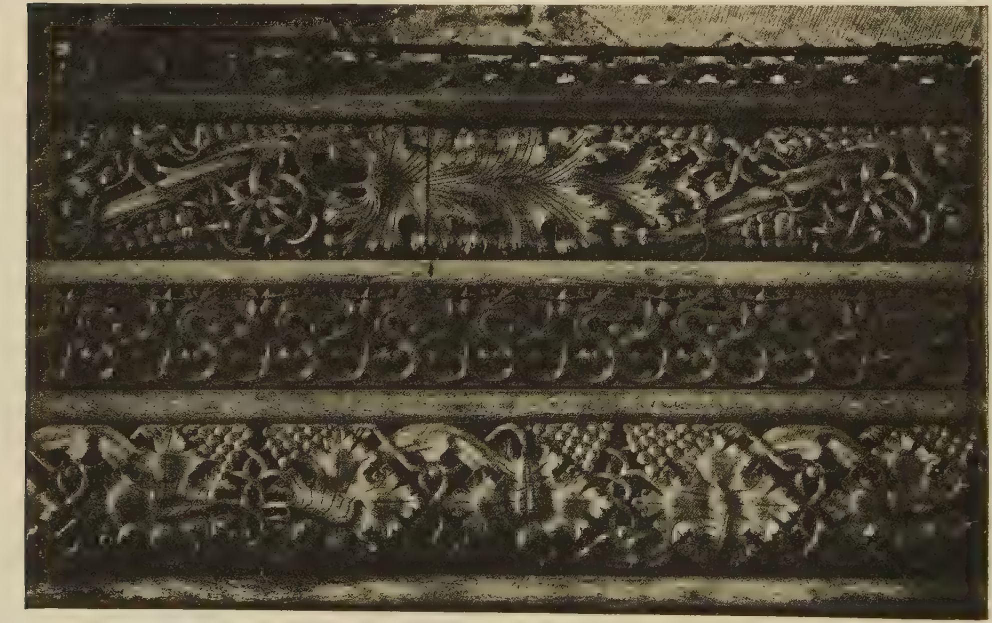
LLANGWYM UCHA, MONMOUTHSHIRE

Photograph by Sydney Pitcher, A.R.P.S.



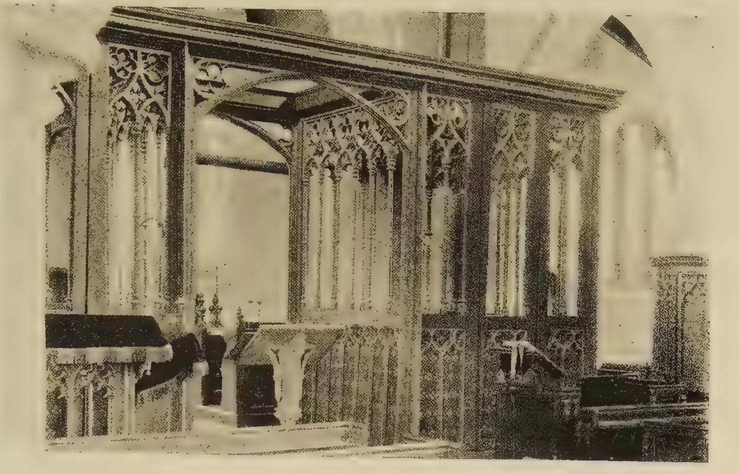
DARESBURY, CHESHIRE, COVING OF SCREEN, NOW DESTROYED

Aymestrey (264) illustrates the west country method of meeting the problem of masking the pendant arches of the vault. Here the usual bressummer has a series of pendant posts with arches between them, hanging down to support the vault, a treatment also found in the fan-vaulted screen of Conway. Sometimes in Wales these pendant arches are used for their own sake, even when the vault simply rises straight to the bressummer in half bays, as at Llanrwst (270).

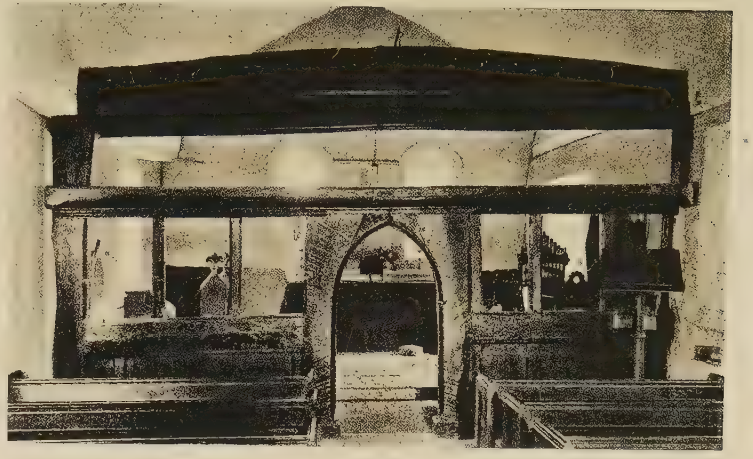


ATHERINGTON, DEVONSHIRE, DETAIL OF SCREEN, WEST SIDE

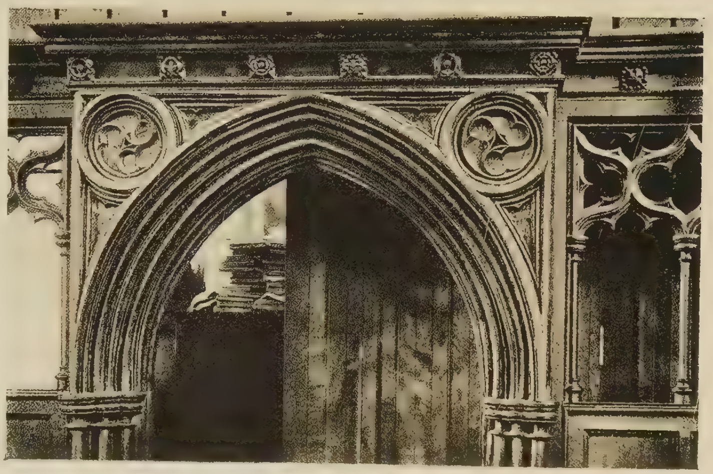
THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF THE SCREEN—THIRTEENTH AND FOURTEENTH CENTURIES



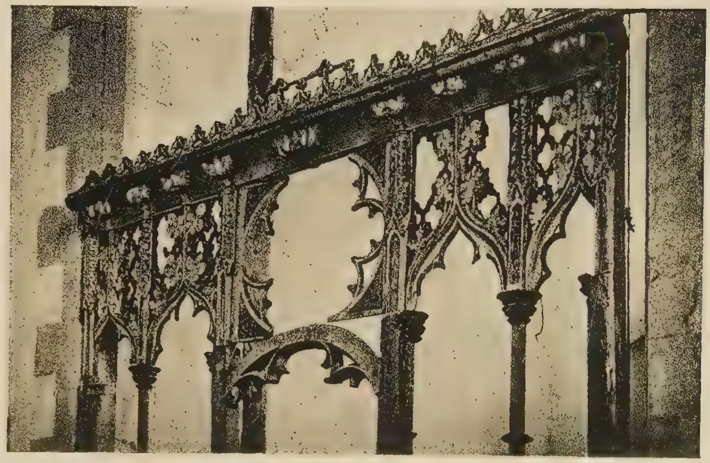
GUILDEN MORDEN, CAMBS., EARLY FOURTEENTH CENTURY



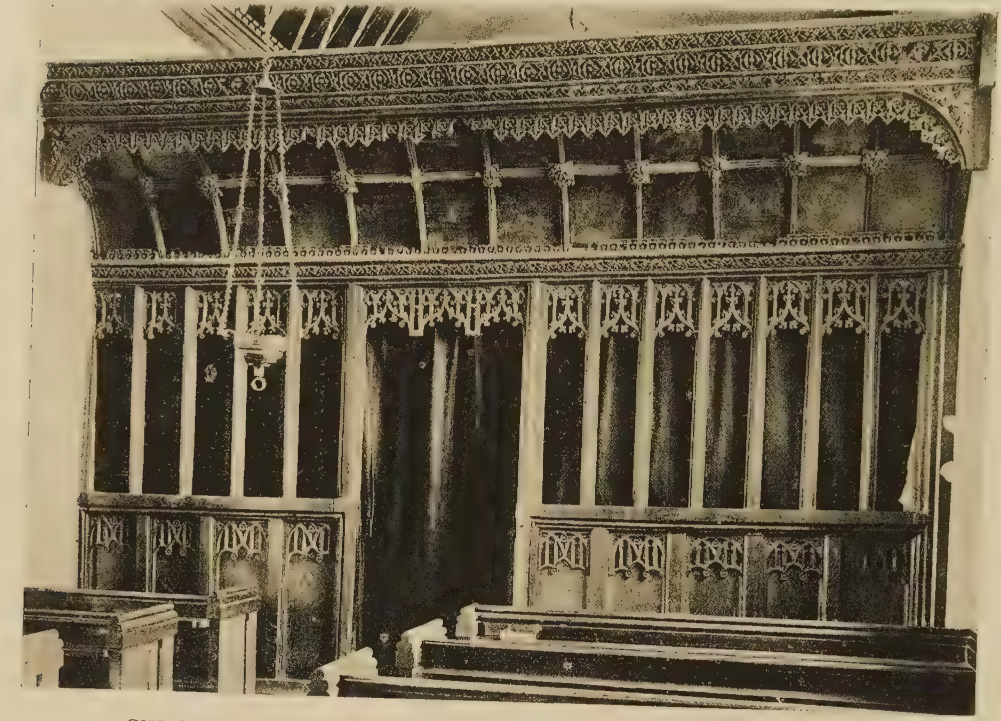
PIXLEY, HEREFORD, PROBABLY THIRTEENTH CENTURY



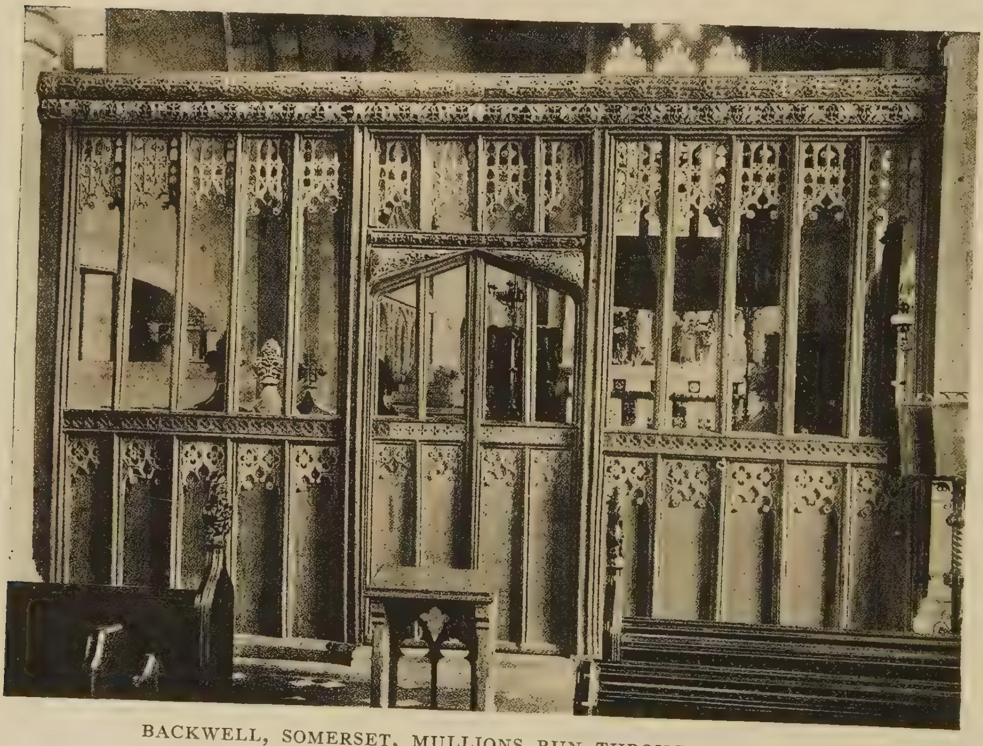
KIRK ELLA, YORKS.,
STONE MOTIVES IN TIMBER



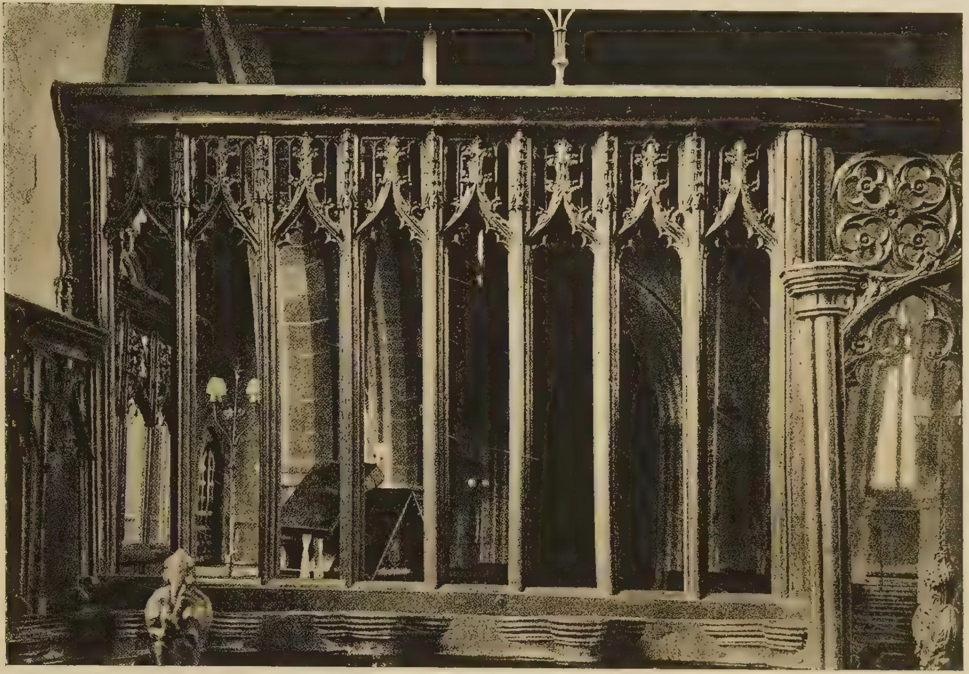
SOUTHACRE, NORFOLK,
THE GERM OF THE EAST ANGLIAN TYPE



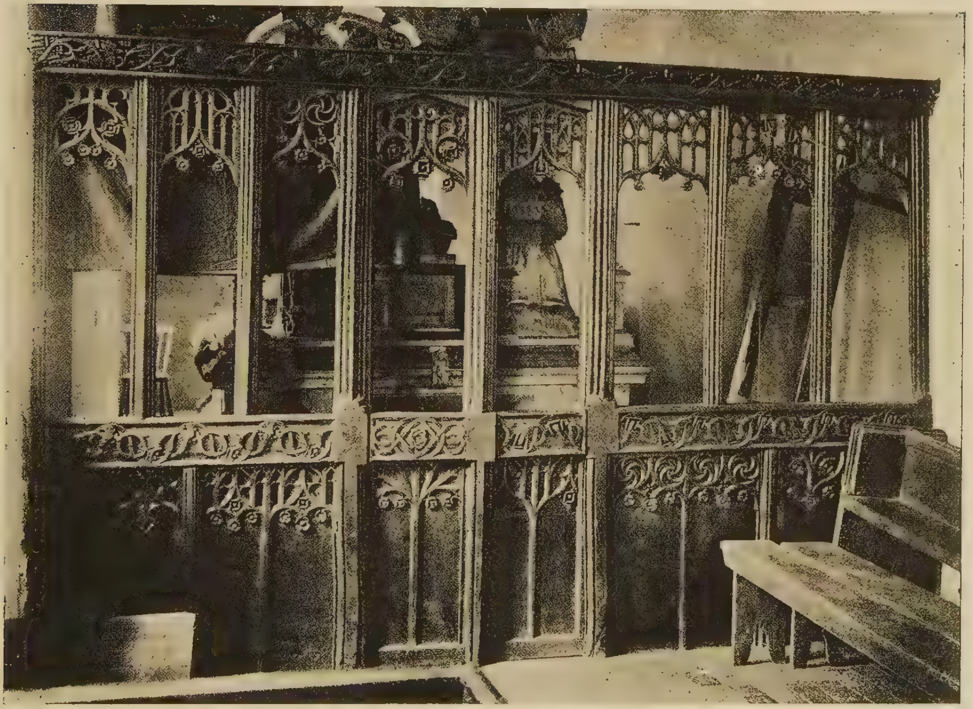
CHRISTIAN MALFORD, WILTS., MULLIONS FORKED OVER TRACERY



BACKWELL, SOMERSET, MULLIONS RUN THROUGH TO HEAD

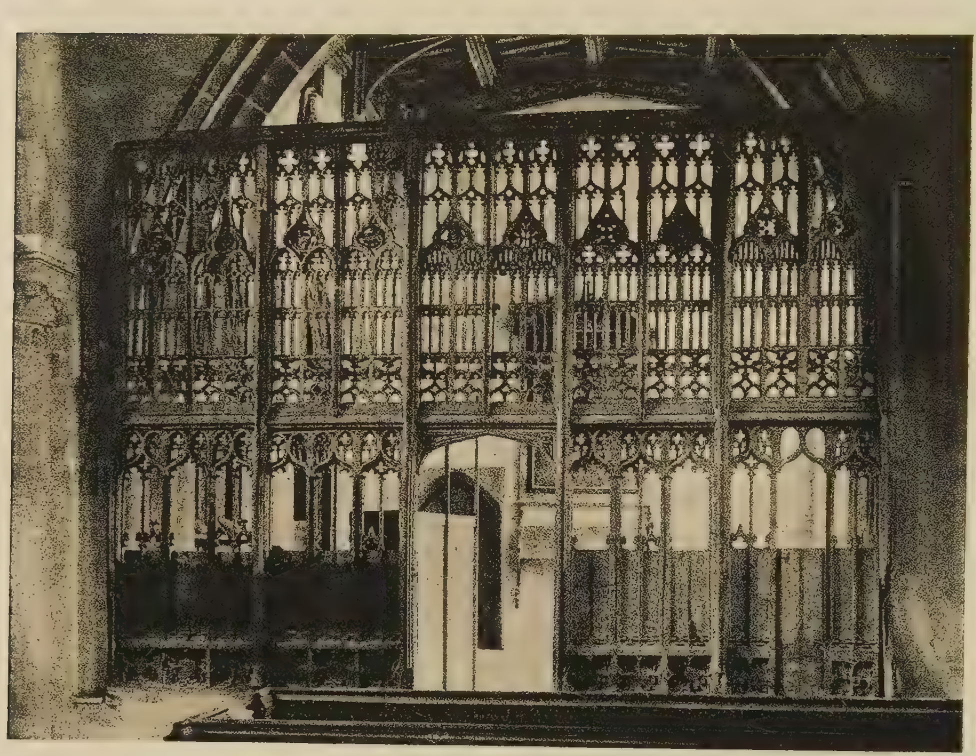


HIGHAM FERRERS, NORTHANTS, WITH APPLIED OGEES

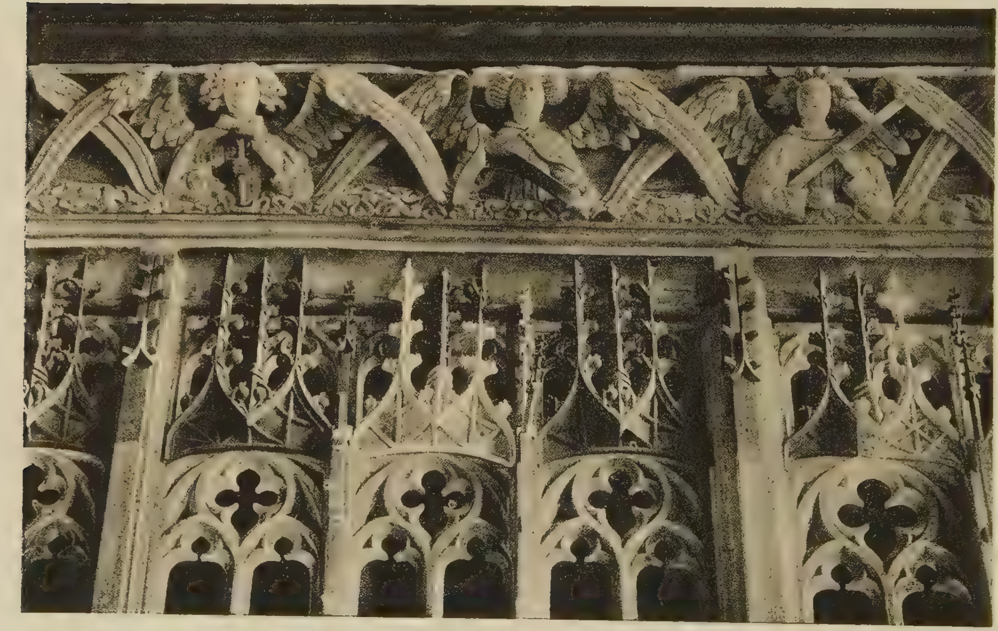


BLORE RAY, STAFFS., HEADS WIDE AND DEEP AS IN WALES

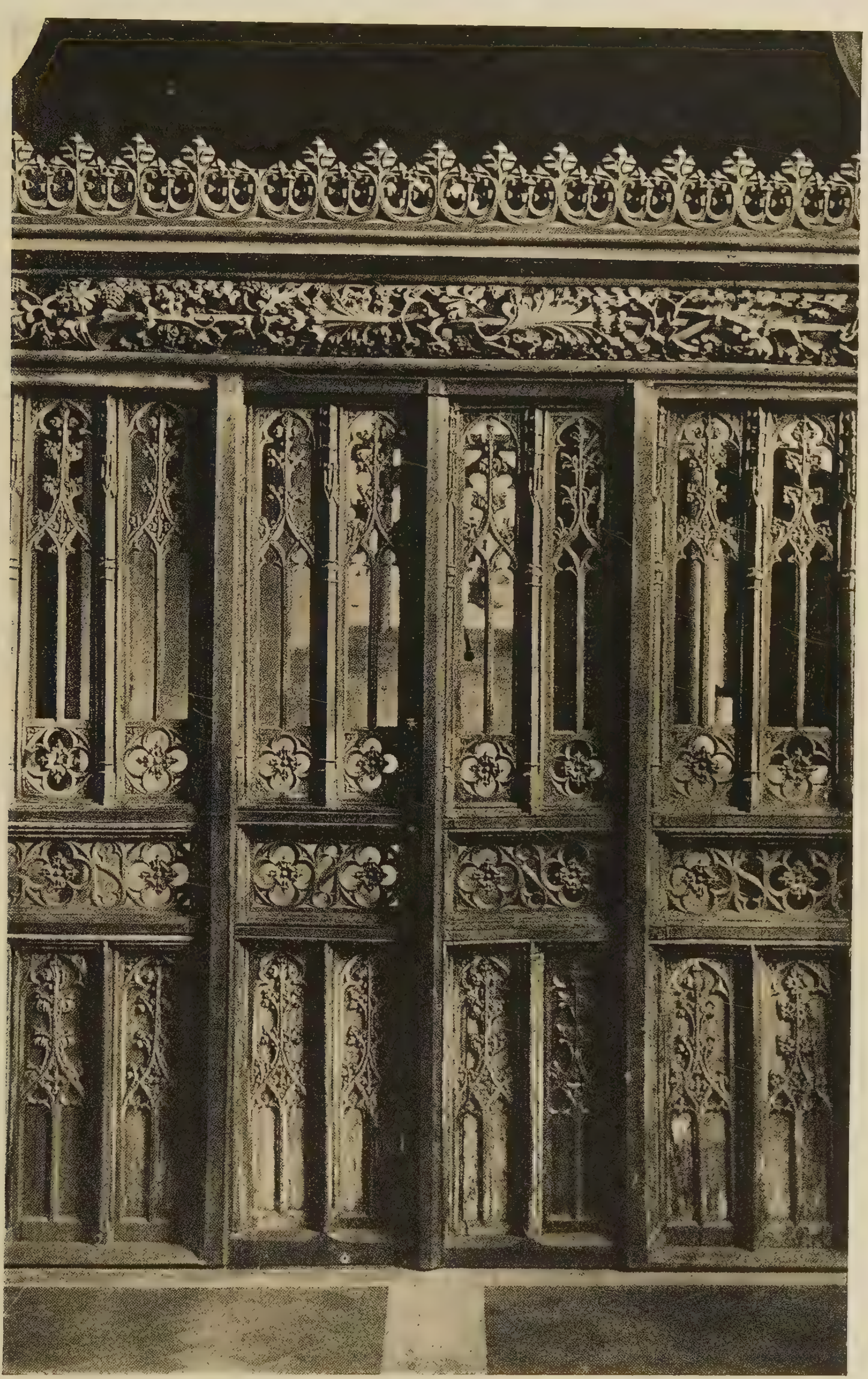
THE SQUARE-FRAMED SCREEN—ELABORATED VERSIONS, EASTERN SCHOOL



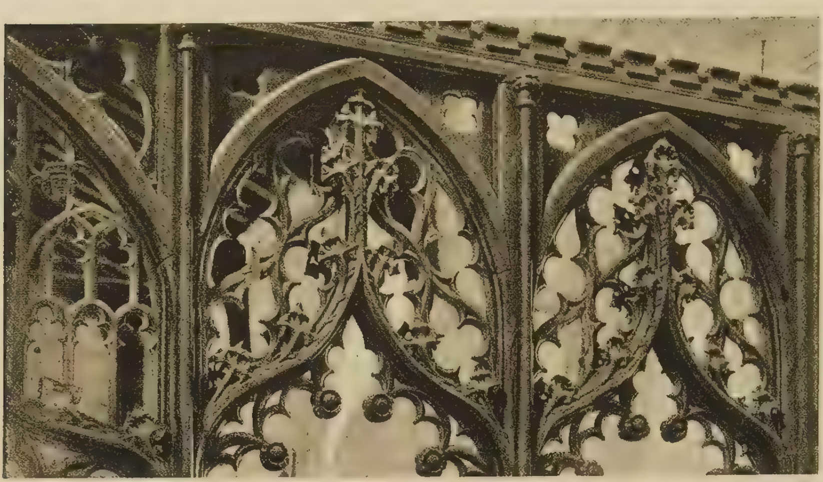
WALSOKEN, NORFOLK, WITH TRANSOM OPENINGS COMPLETELY TRACERIED



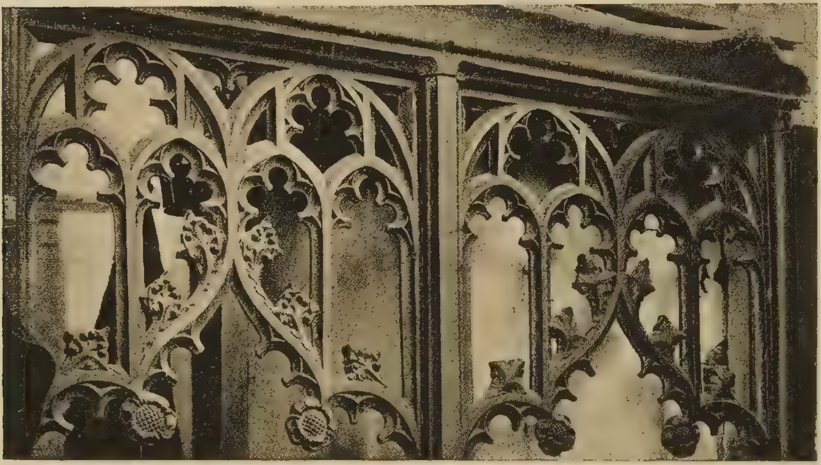
HITCHIN, HERTS., TRACERY WITH APPLIED TABERNACLE WORK



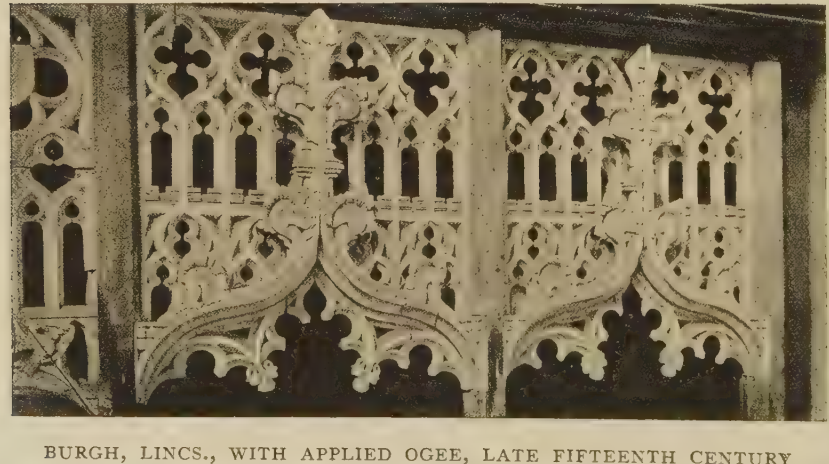
DUNSTER, SOMERSET, OPENINGS COMPLETELY TRACERIED



FISHTOFT, LINCS., ARCHED SCREEN, LATE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

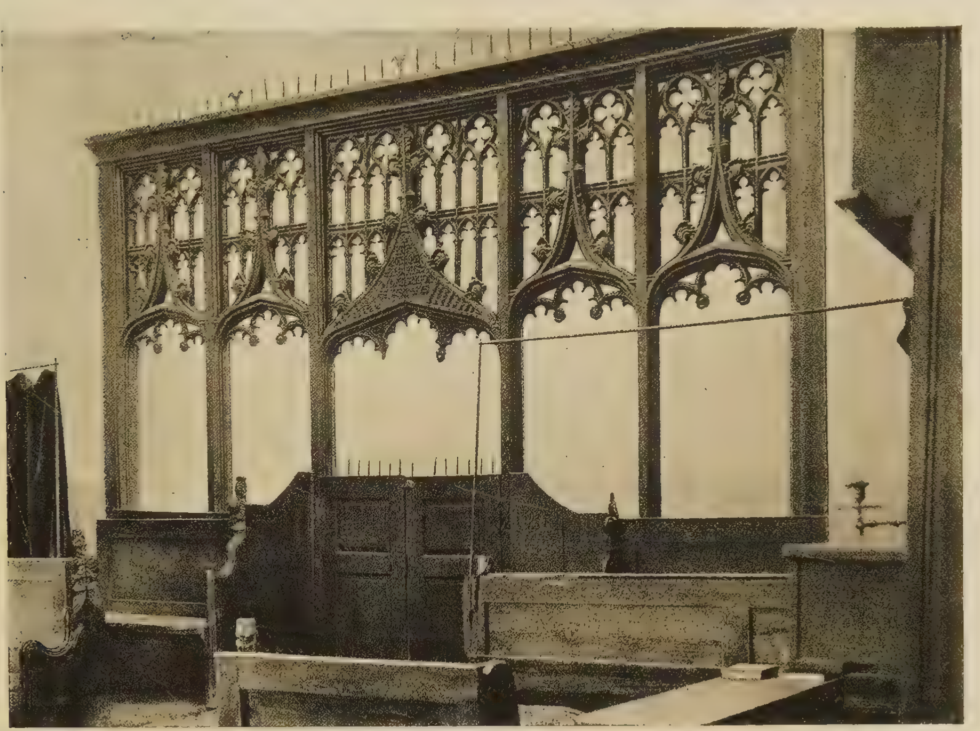


ADDLETHORPE, LINCS., WIDE & DEEP TRACERY, EARLY FIFTEENTH CENTURY

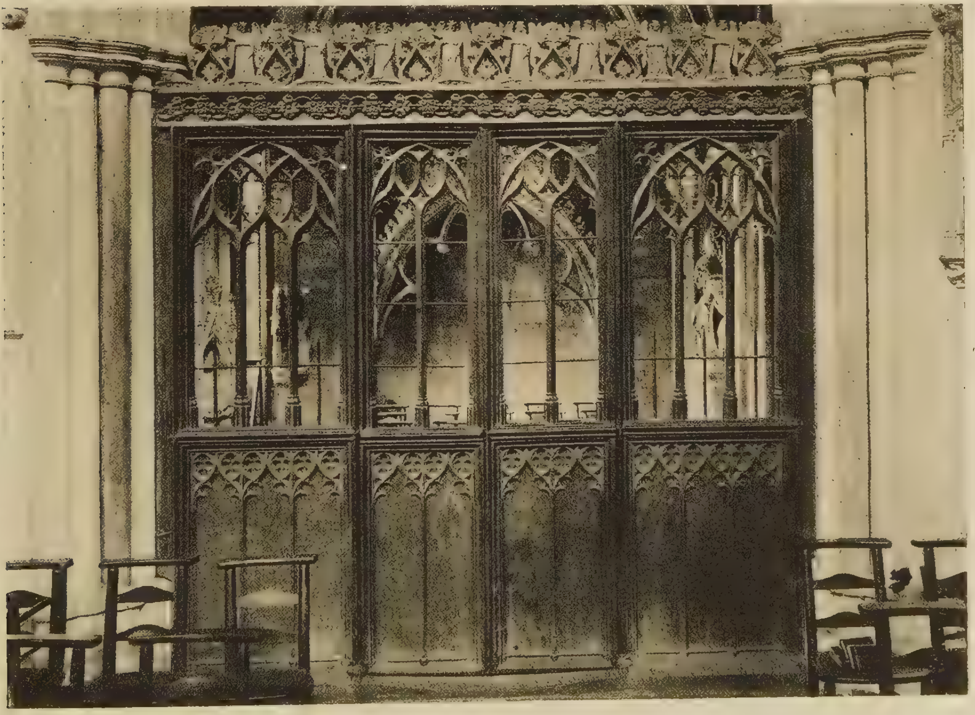


BURGH, LINCS., WITH APPLIED OGEE, LATE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

THE SQUARE-FRAMED SCREEN—LINCOLN AND DEVON TYPES COMPARED

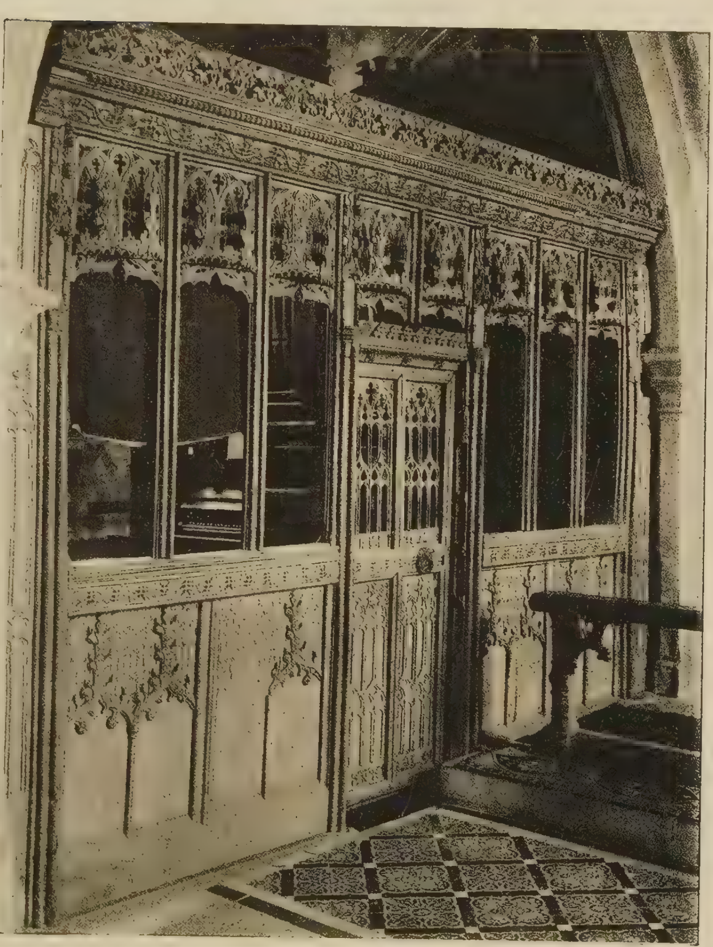


ADDLETHORPE, LINCS., WIDE AND DEEP TRACERY, WITH APPLIED OGEE

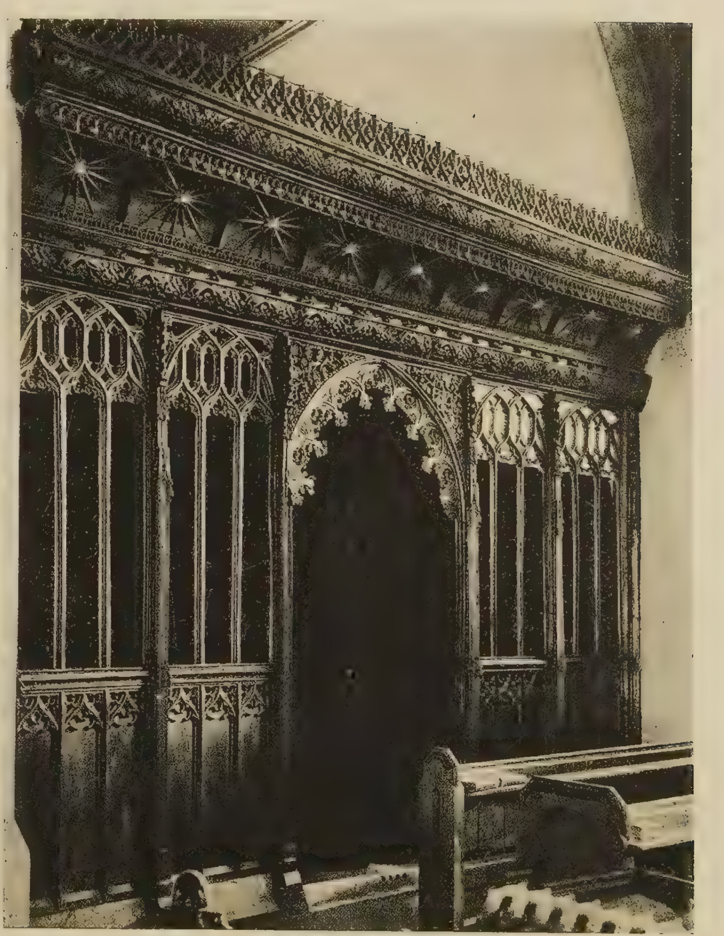


EXETER CATHEDRAL, THICK MOULDED TRACERY, WITH DOWELLED MULLIONS

THE SQUARE-FRAMED SCREEN—YORKS. AND SOMERSET TYPES COMPARED

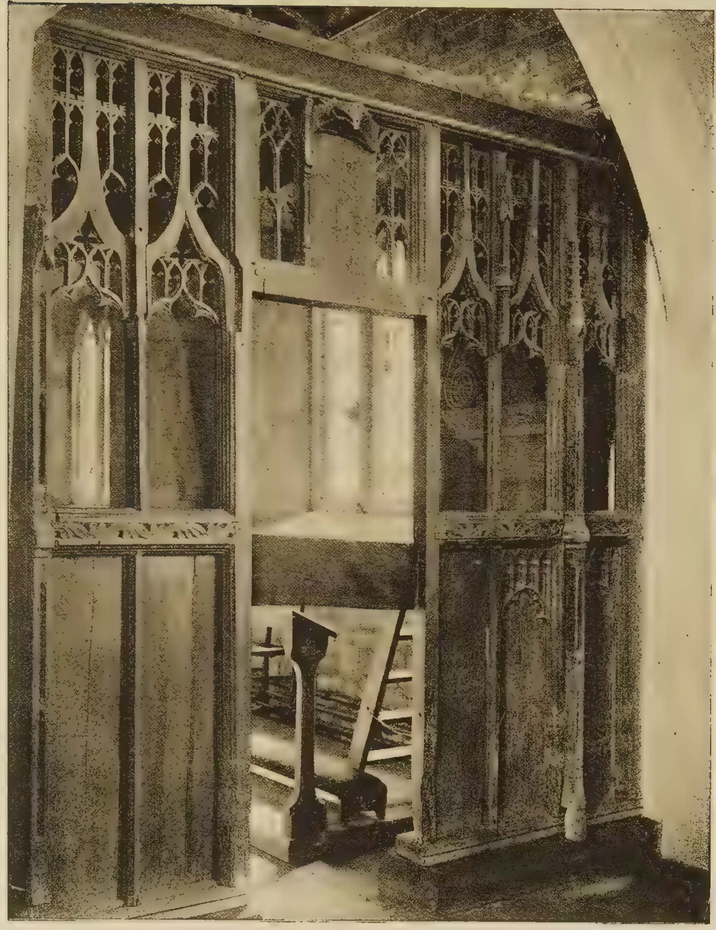


KIRK SANDALL, YORKS., WITH APPLIED TABERNACLE WORK

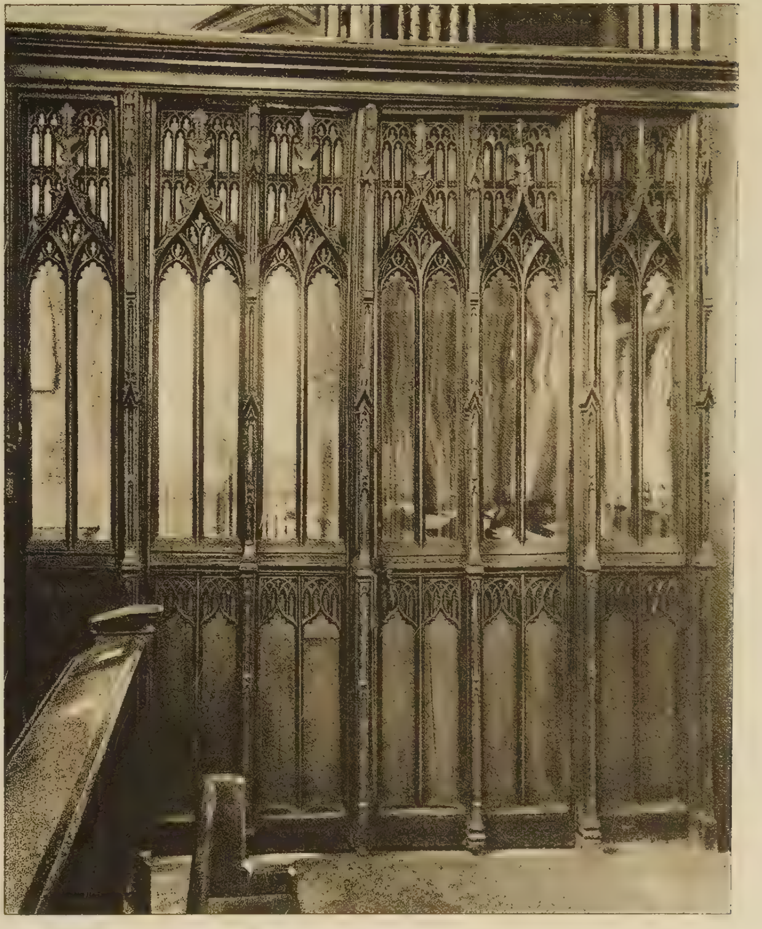


KEYNSHAM, SOMERSET, THICK TRACERY & DOWELLED MULLIONS

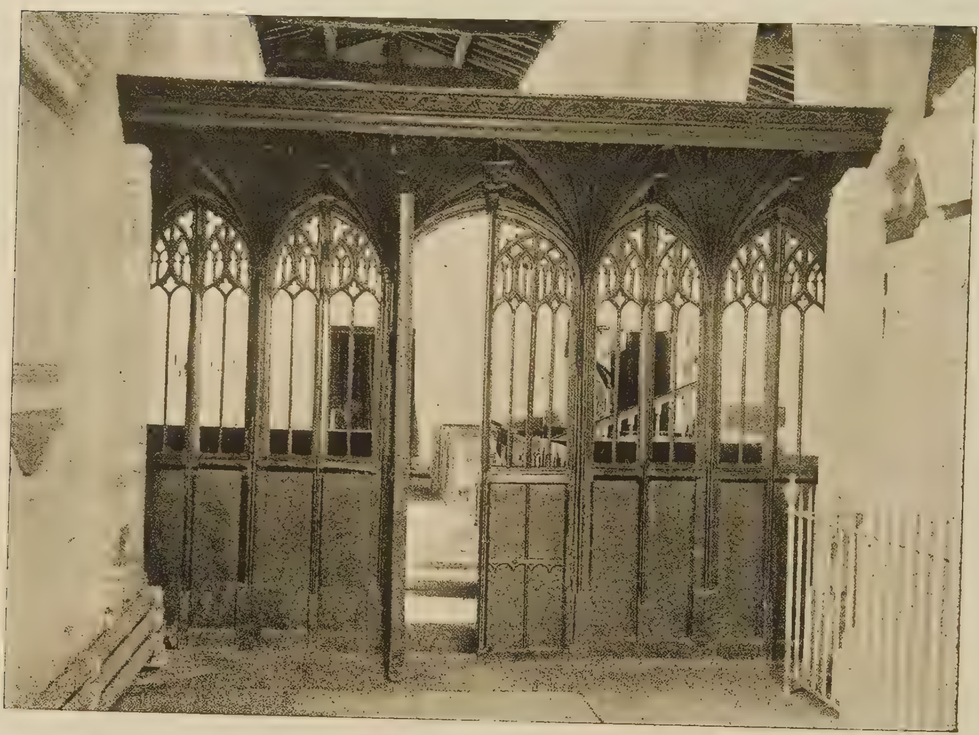
THE SQUARE-FRAMED SCREEN—YORKSHIRE TYPE



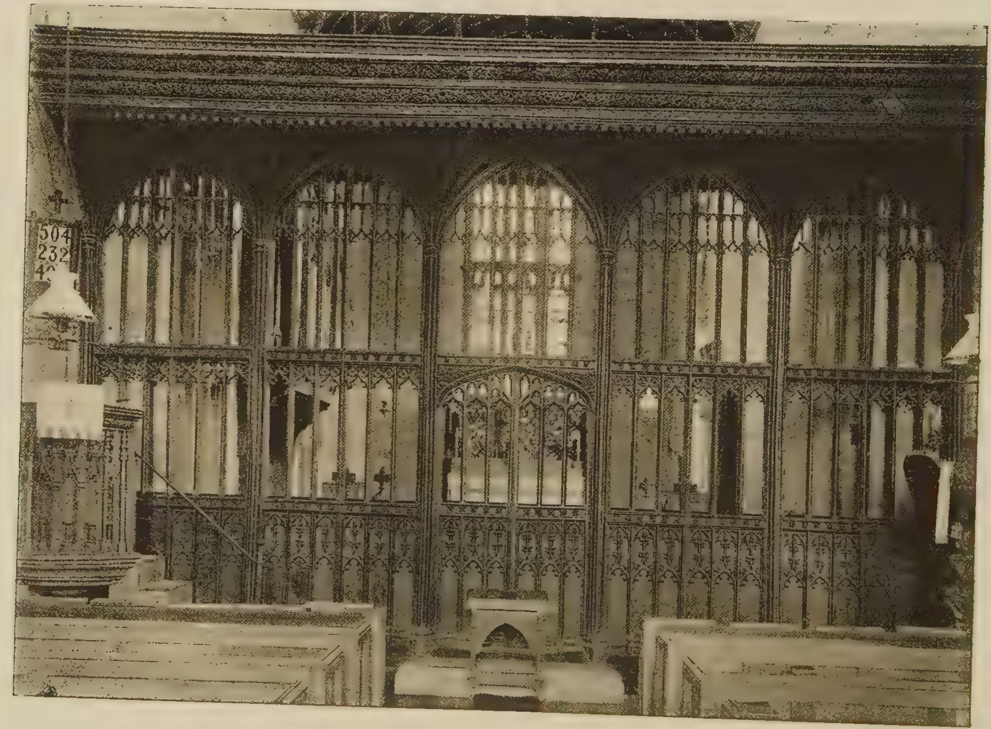
FLAMBOROUGH, YORKS., SINGLE LIGHT TYPE



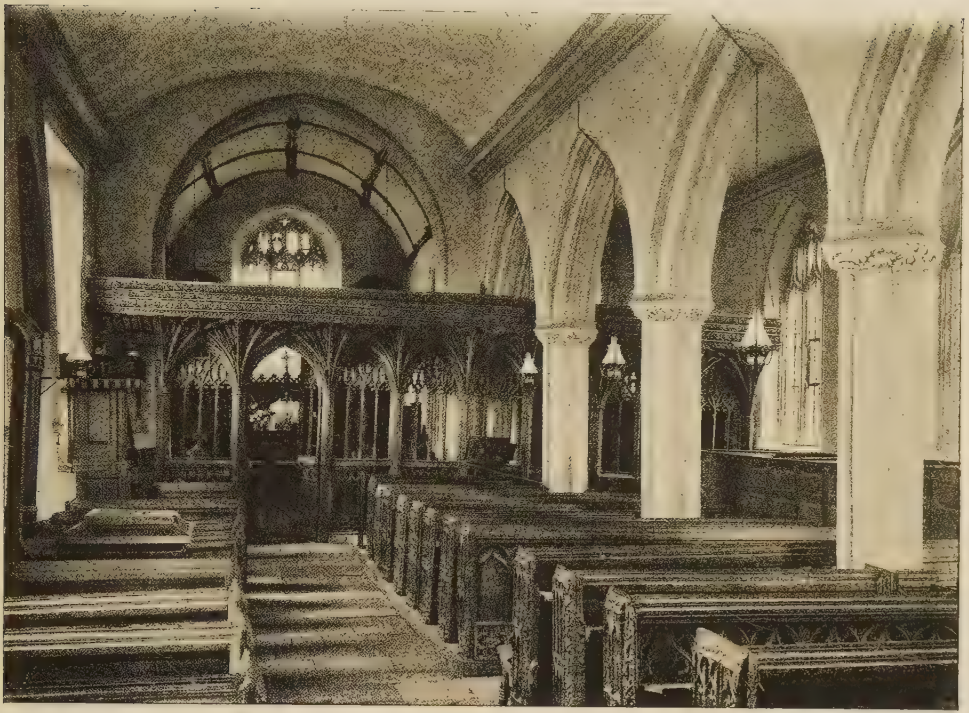
HOLY TRINITY, HULL, YORKS., SINGLE LIGHT TYPE



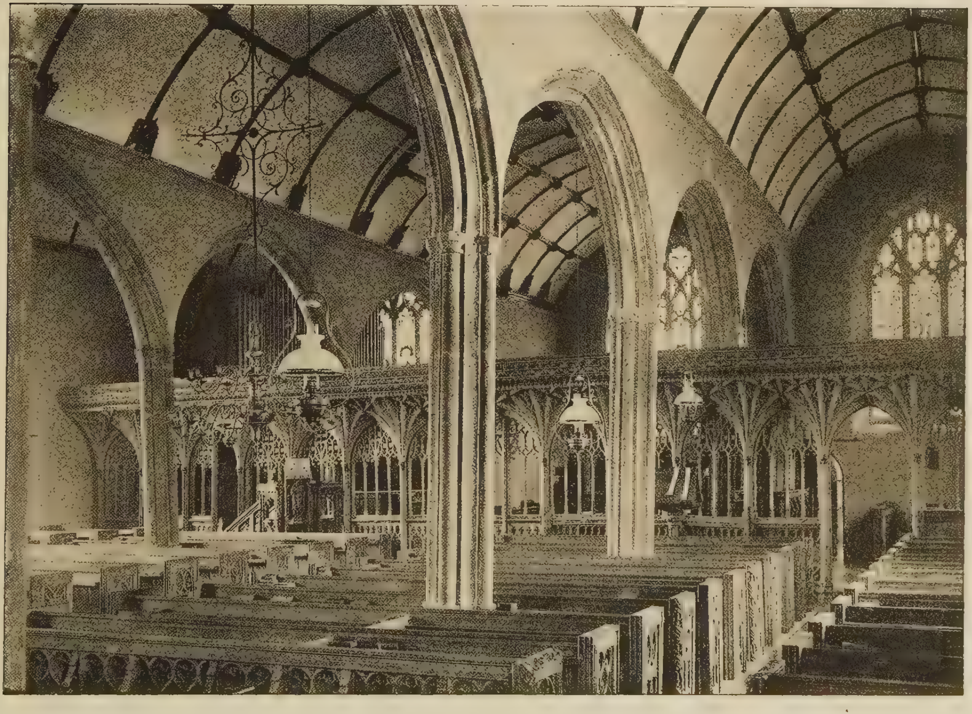
ASHBY ST LEDGERS (EXCEPTIONAL TRACERY)



QUEEN CAMEL, SOMERSET, MULLIONS RUN THROUGH

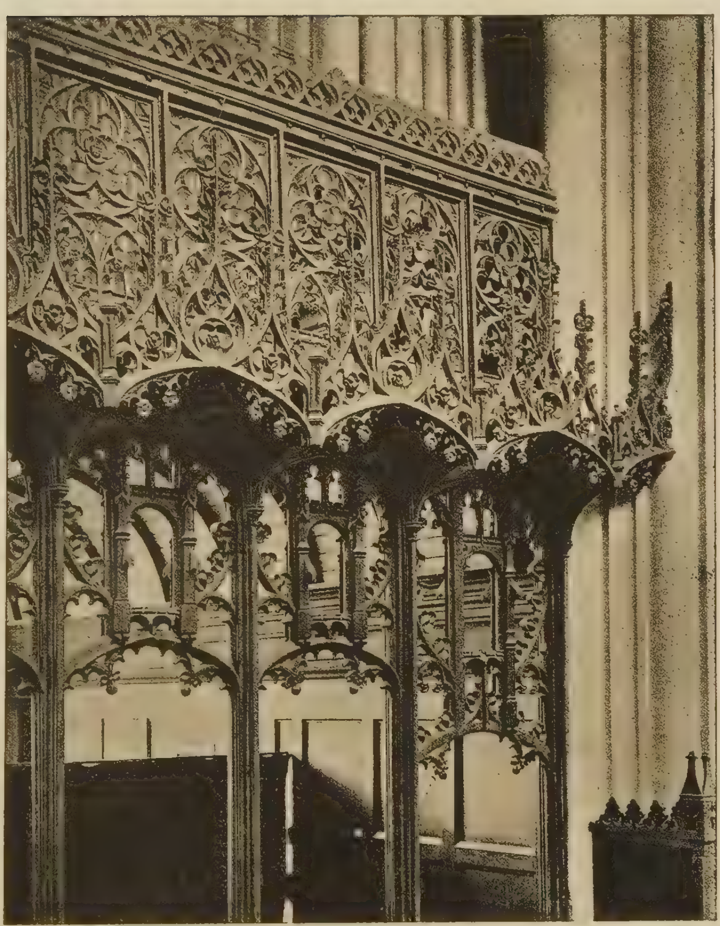


PLYMTREE, DEVON, WITH DOWELLED MULLIONS

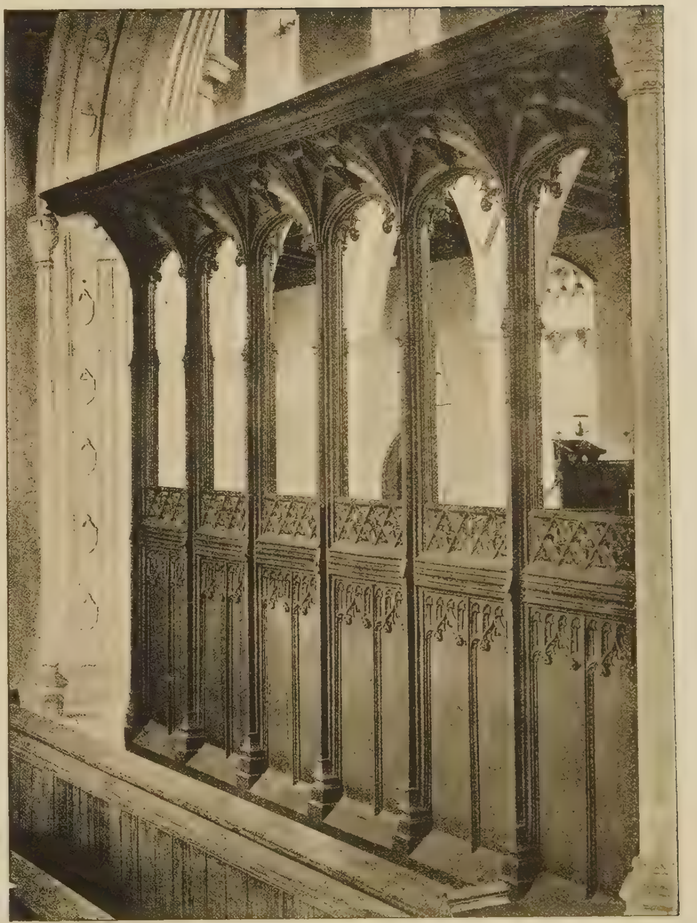


CHULMLEIGH, DEVON, LATE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

THE ARCHED SCREEN—EAST ANGLIAN TYPES

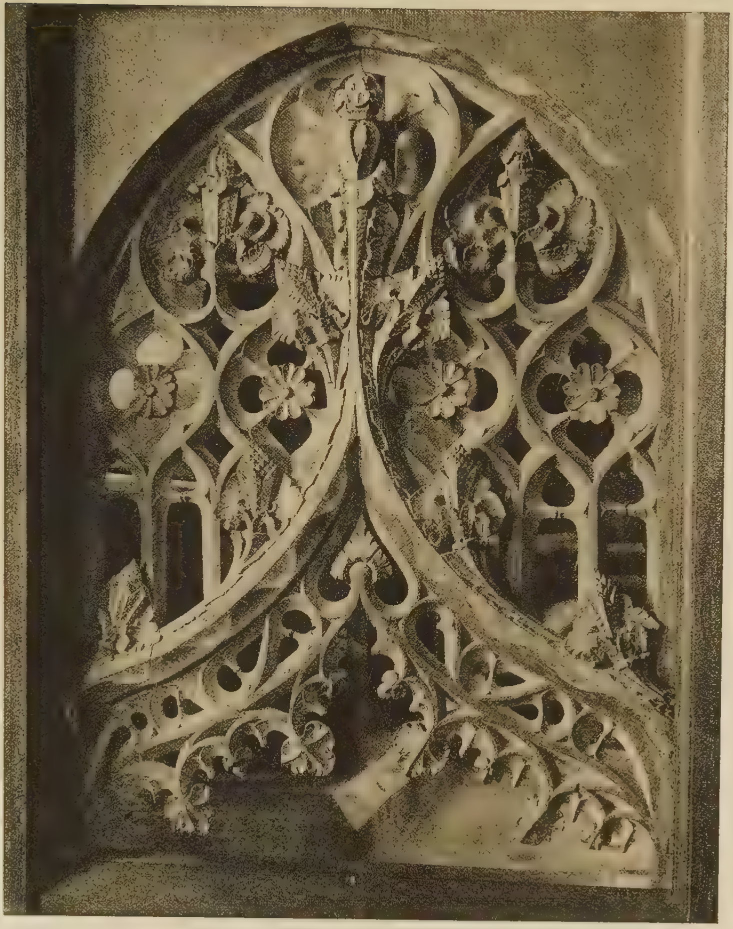


SOUTHWOLD, SUFFOLK, DEEP TRACERY WITH NICHES

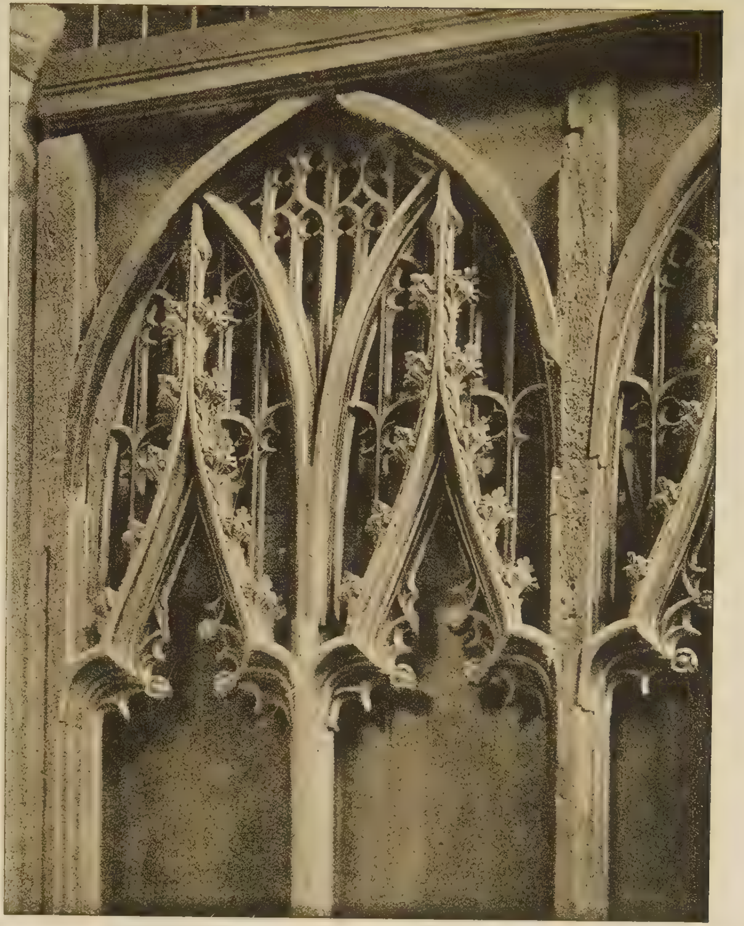


WINGFIELD, SUFFOLK, WITHOUT TRACERY

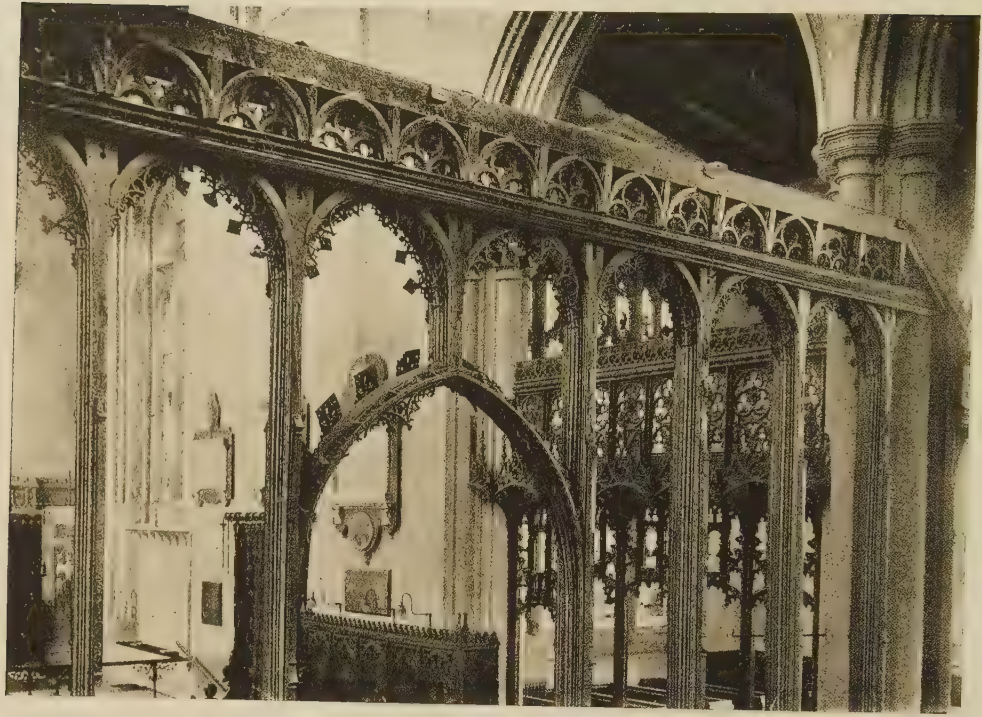
THE ARCHED SCREEN—EASTERN TYPES



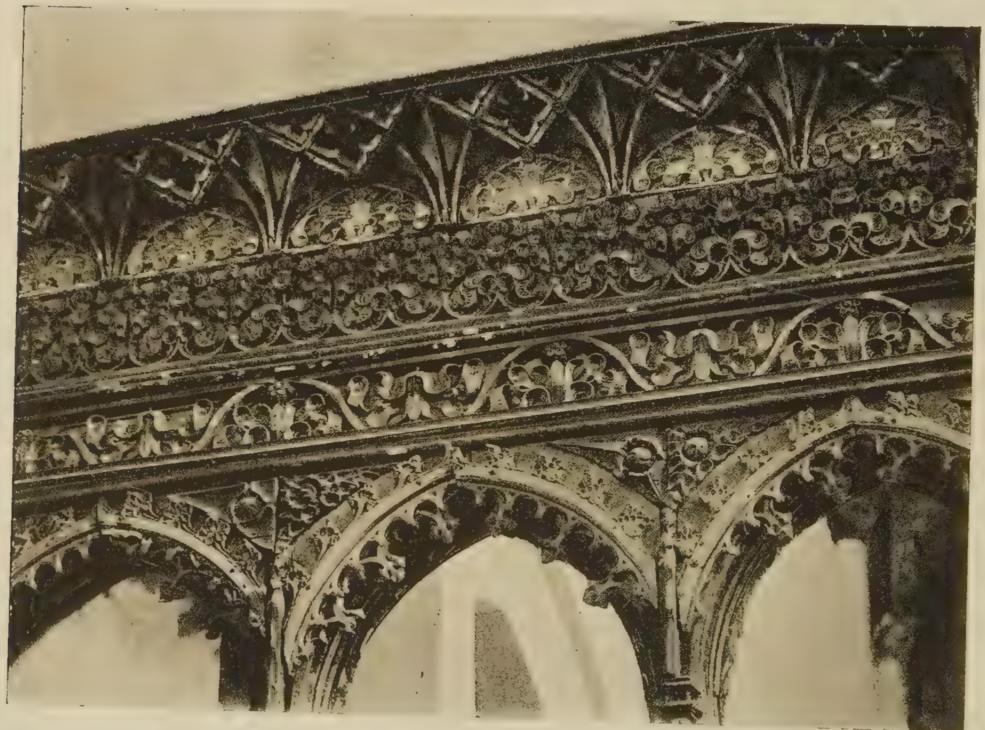
SIBTON, SUFFOLK, LATE SUFFOLK TYPE,
SINGLE LIGHT



ADDLETHORPE, LINCS., LINCOLN AND E.R. YORKS. TYPE,
DOUBLE LIGHT

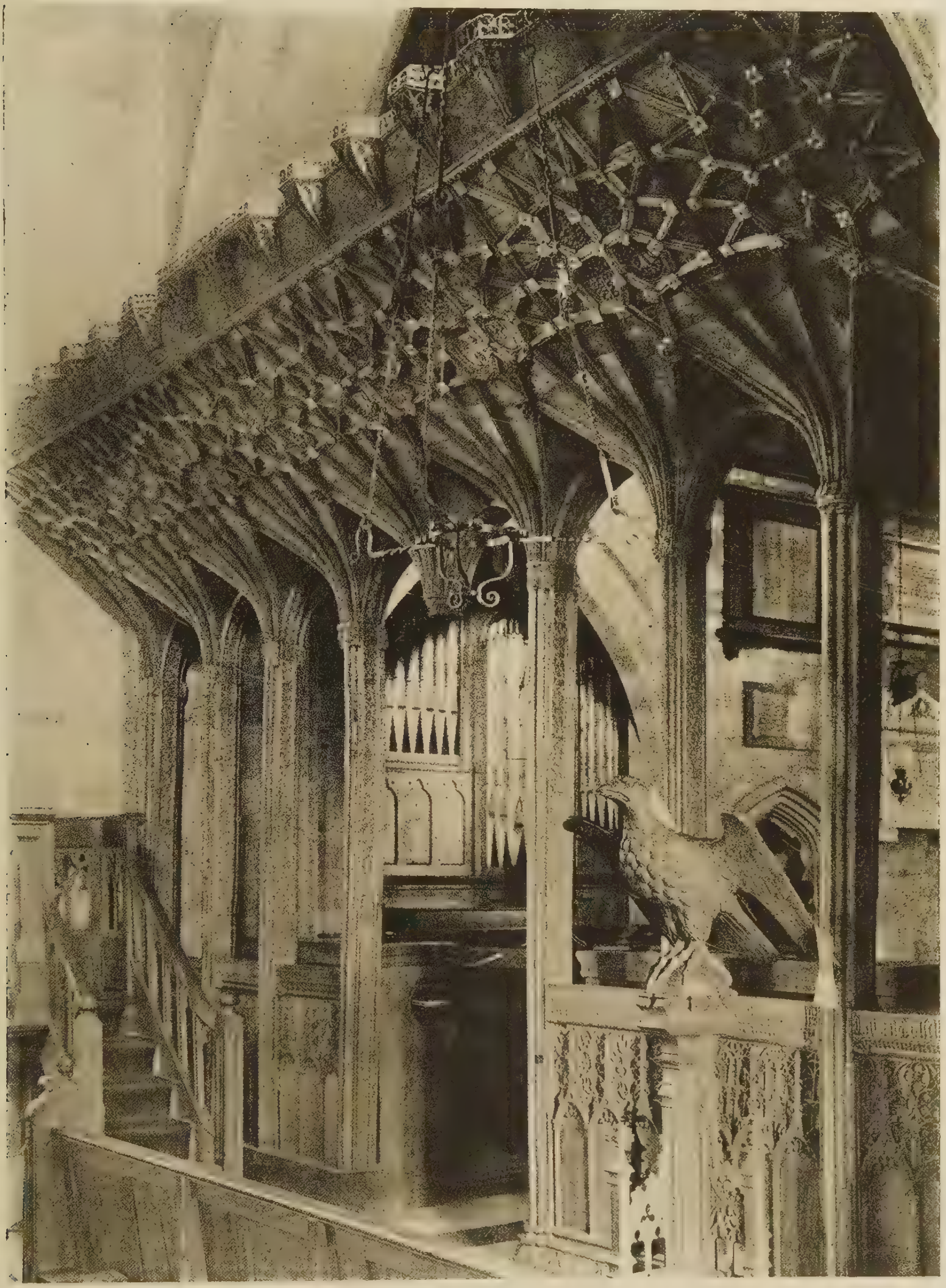


SOUTHWOLD, SUFFOLK, WITH VALUABLE REMAINS OF DESTROYED ROOD-LOFT, LATE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

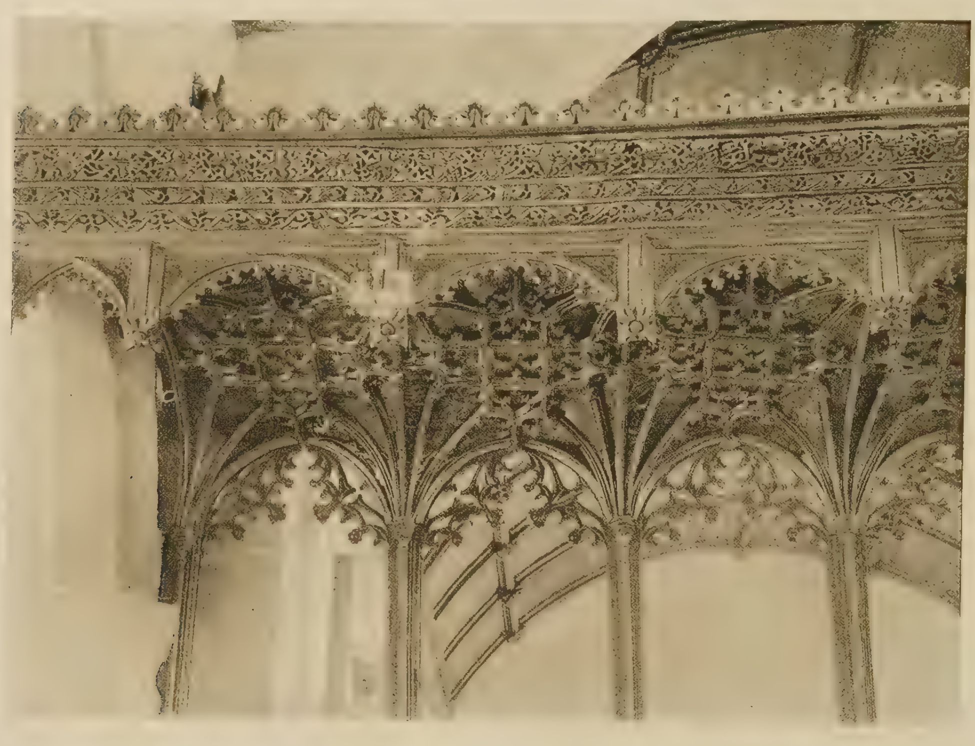


EYE, SUFFOLK, FRAGMENTS OF DESTROYED ROOD-LOFT, EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY

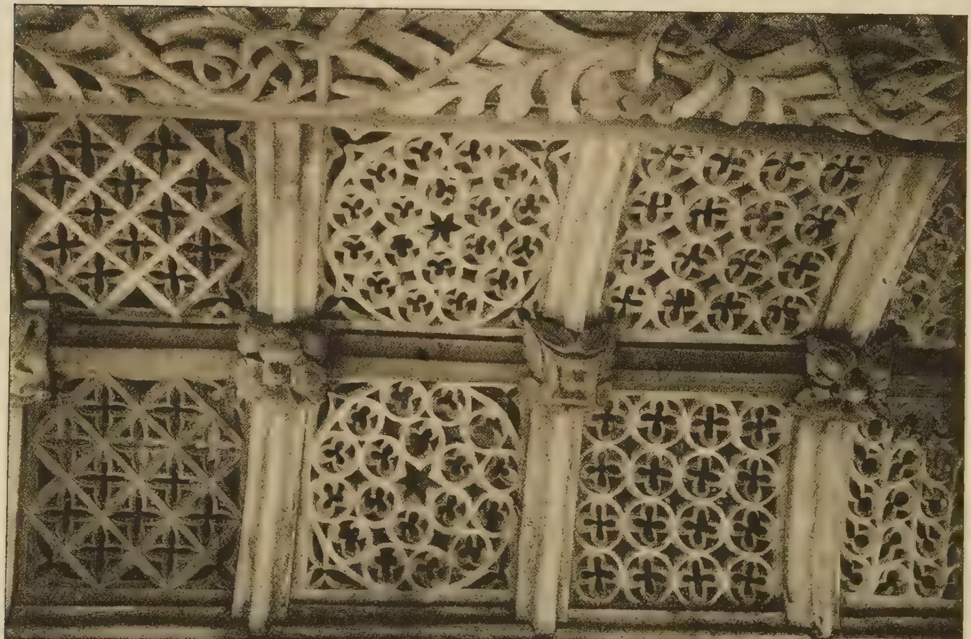
THE ARCHED SCREEN—A NORTH COUNTRY TYPE



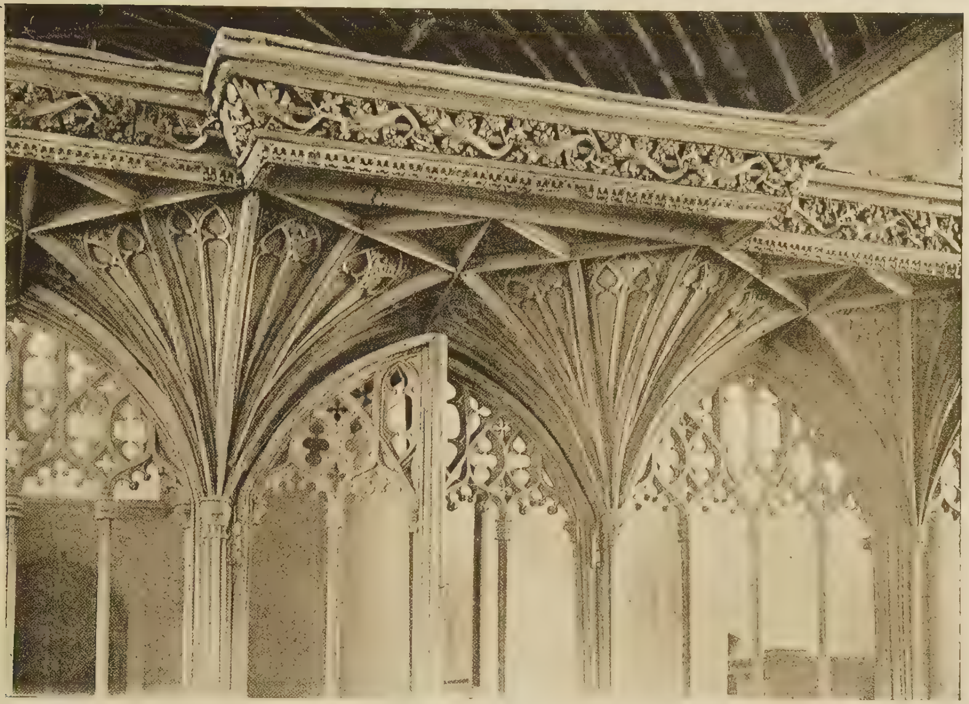
MOBBERLEY, CHESHIRE. DATED 1500



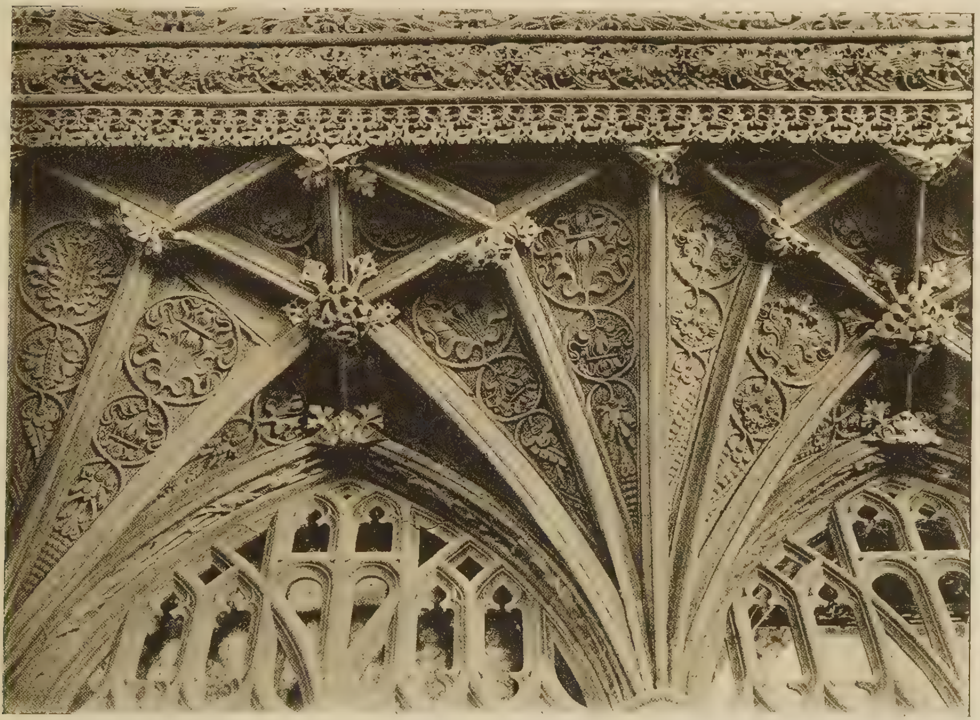
AYMESTREY, HEREFORD, WITH PENDANT VAULTING



LLANANNO, RADNOR, COVING WITH PIERCED PANELS

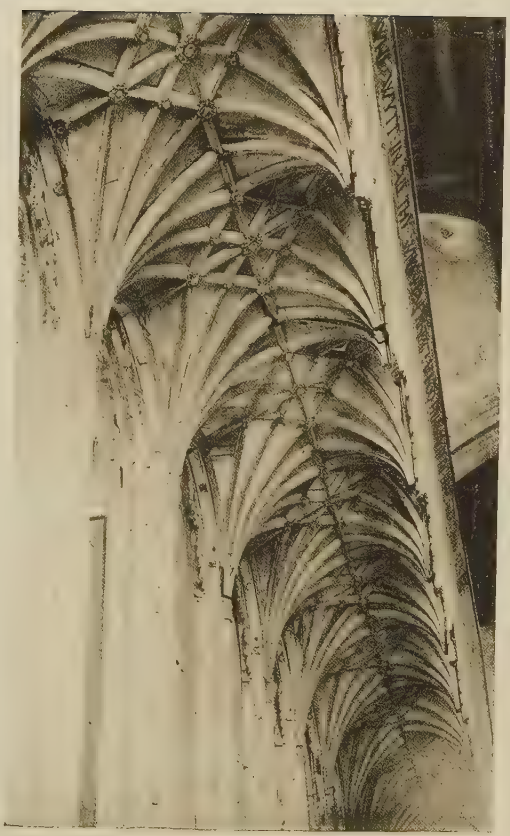


DUNSTER, SOMERSET, TRACERIED PANELS

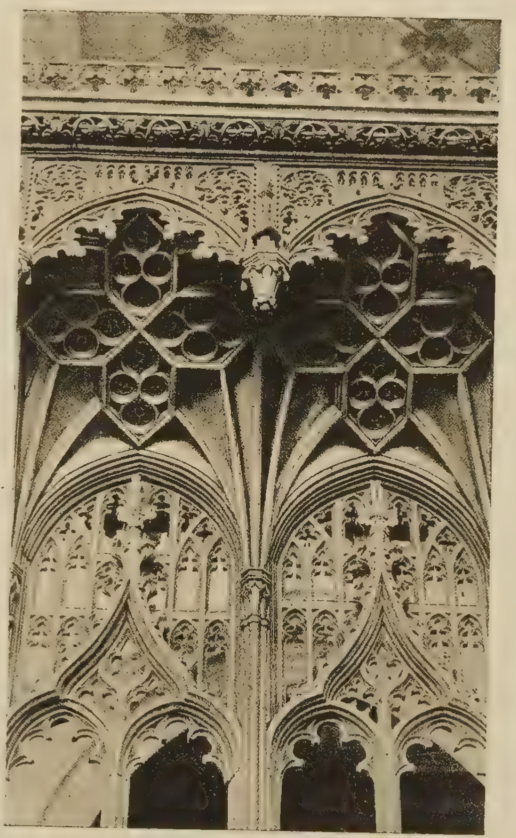


POLTIMORE, DEVON, FOLIAGED PANELS

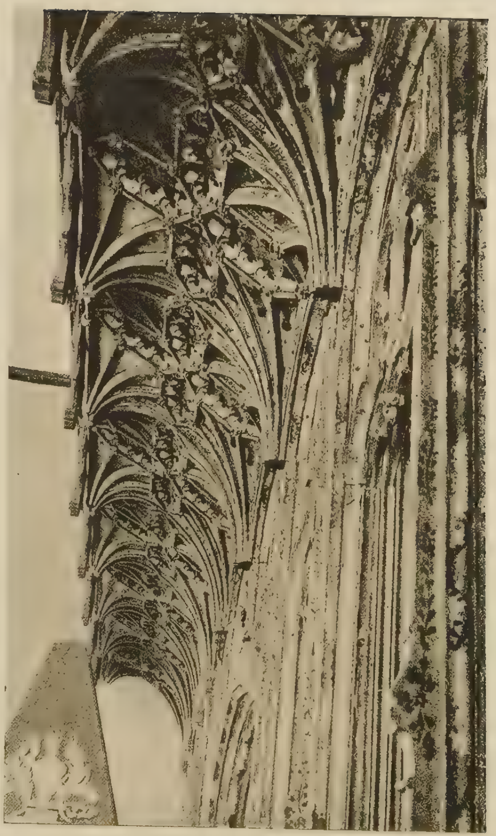
PENDANT VAULTINGS—EAST ANGLIAN TYPE



ATTLEBOROUGH, NORFOLK,
LATE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

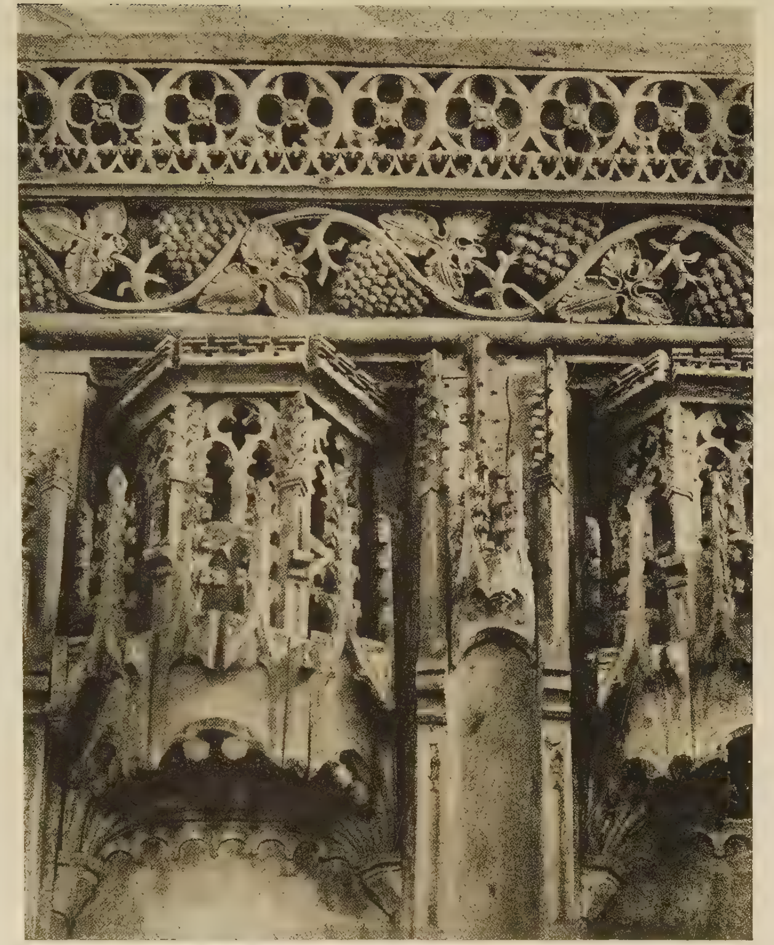


NEWARK, NOTTS., *c.* 1500

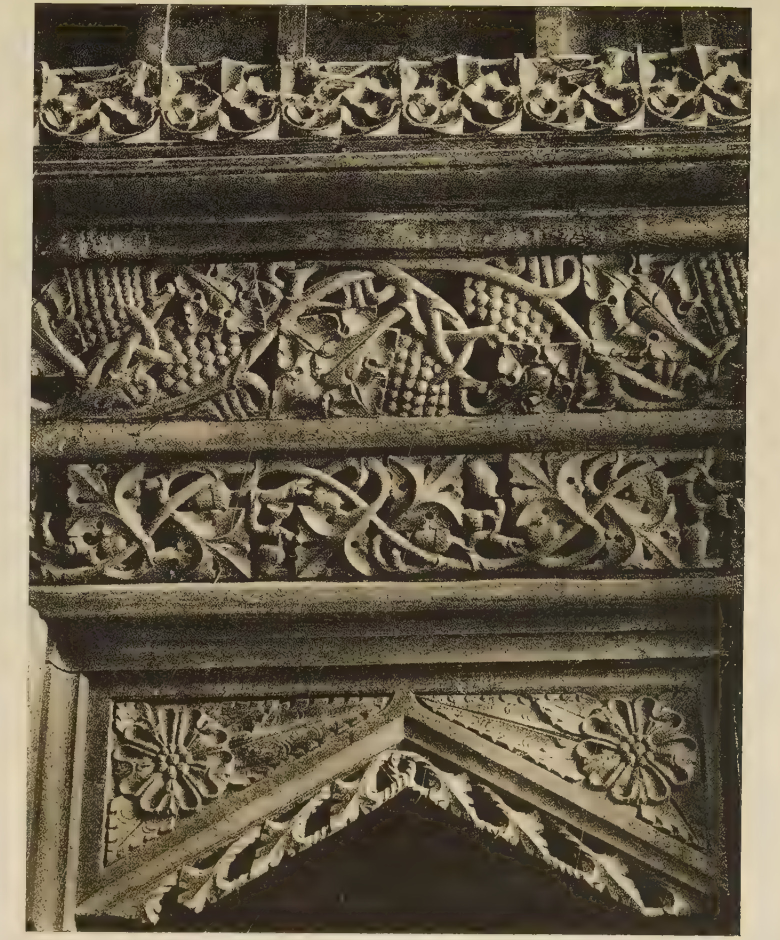


BRAMFIELD, SUFFOLK,
EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY

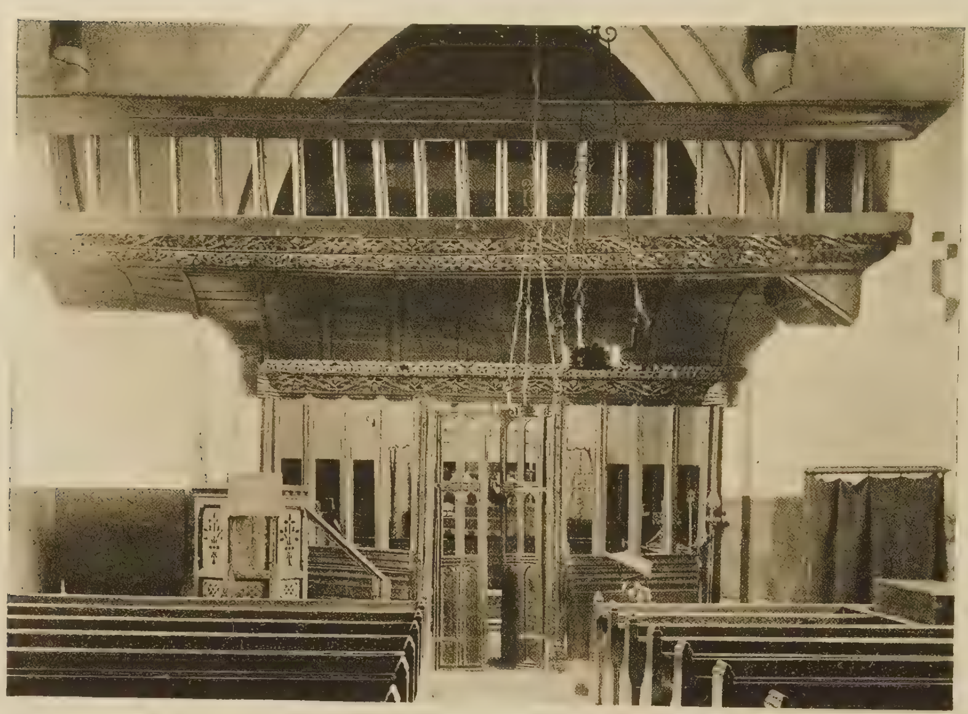
THE ROOD-LOFT—DETAILS FROM YORKS. AND WALES



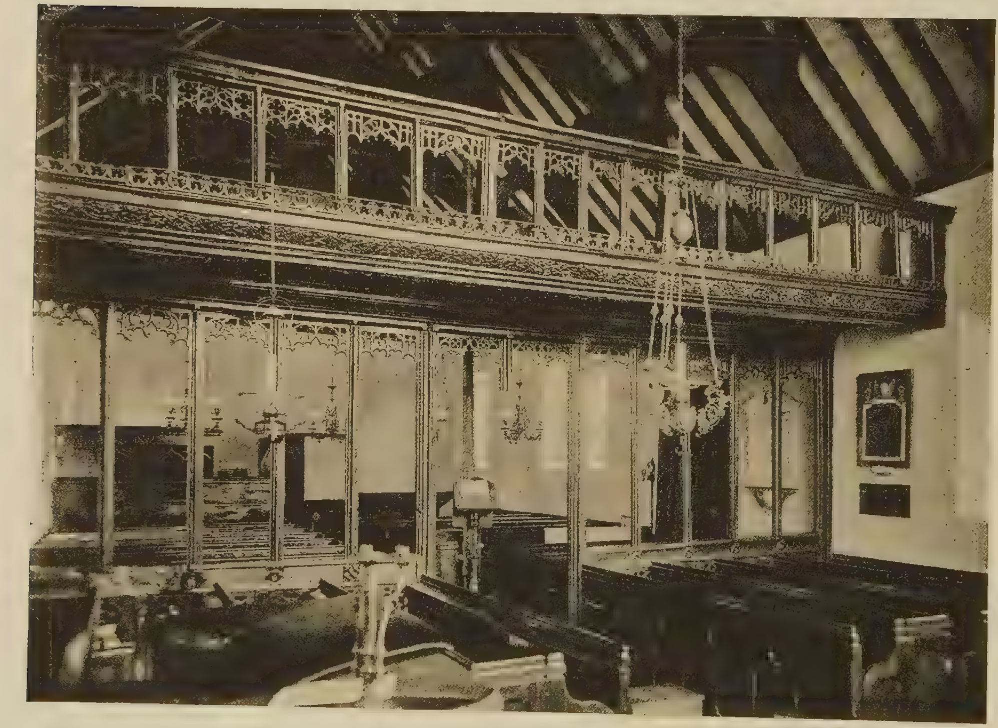
FLAMBOROUGH, YORKS., TABERNACLE WORK



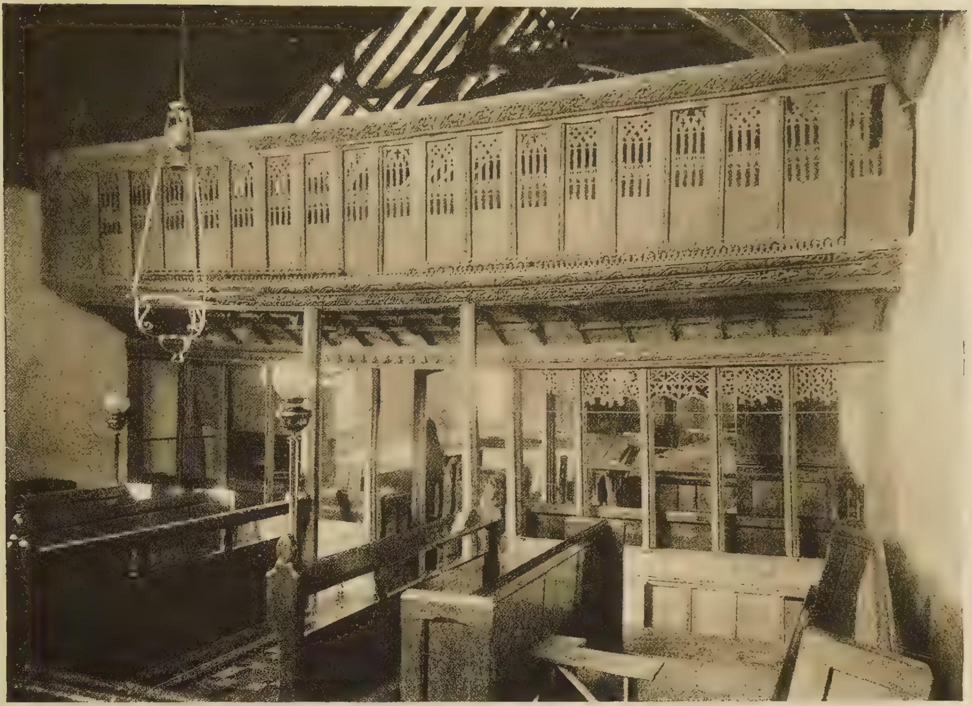
LLANRWST, DENBIGH, BRESSUMMER



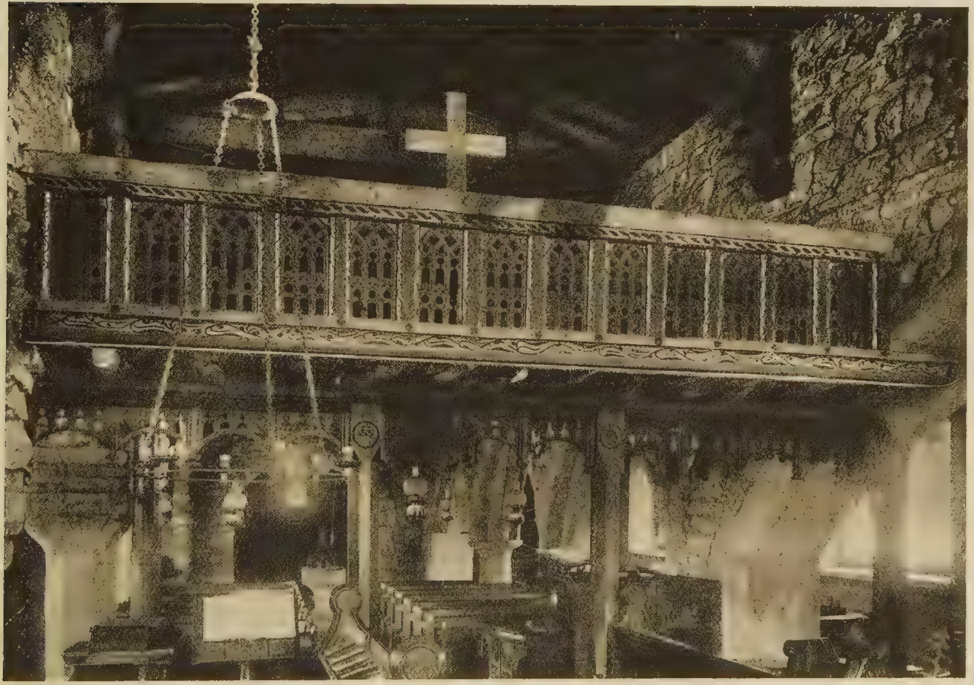
LLANEILIAN, ANGLESEY, OPEN PANELS WITHOUT TRACERY



DERWEN, DENBIGH, OPEN PANELS, TRACERY HEADS

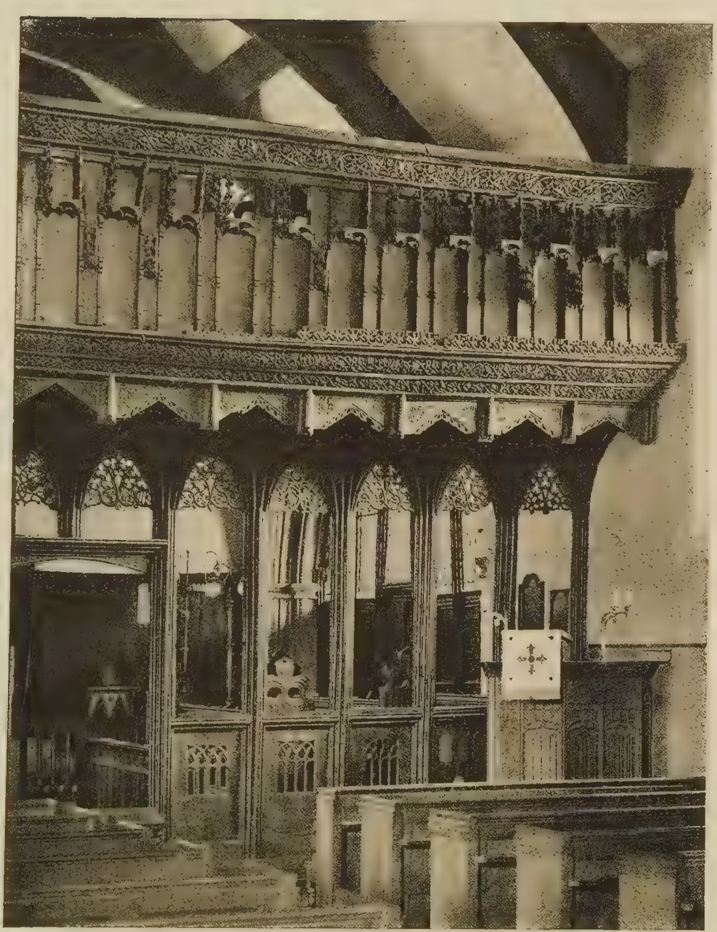


LLANWNOG, MONTGOMERY, PIERCED GRATINGS IN PANELS

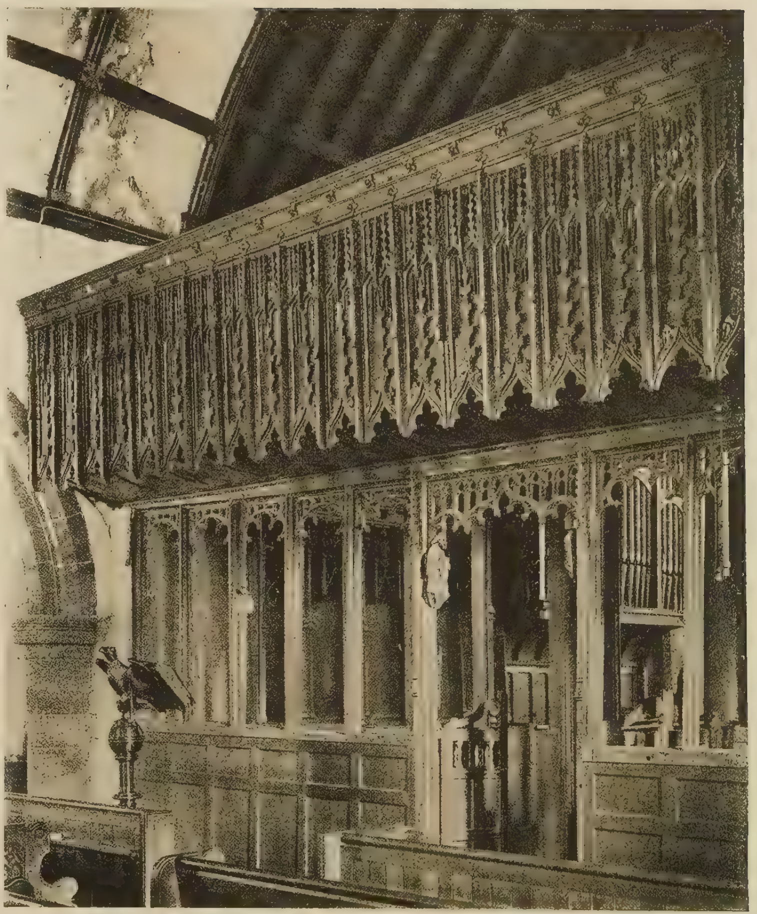


HUBBERHOLME, YORKS., PIERCED PANELS

THE ROOD-LOFT—WELSH TYPES

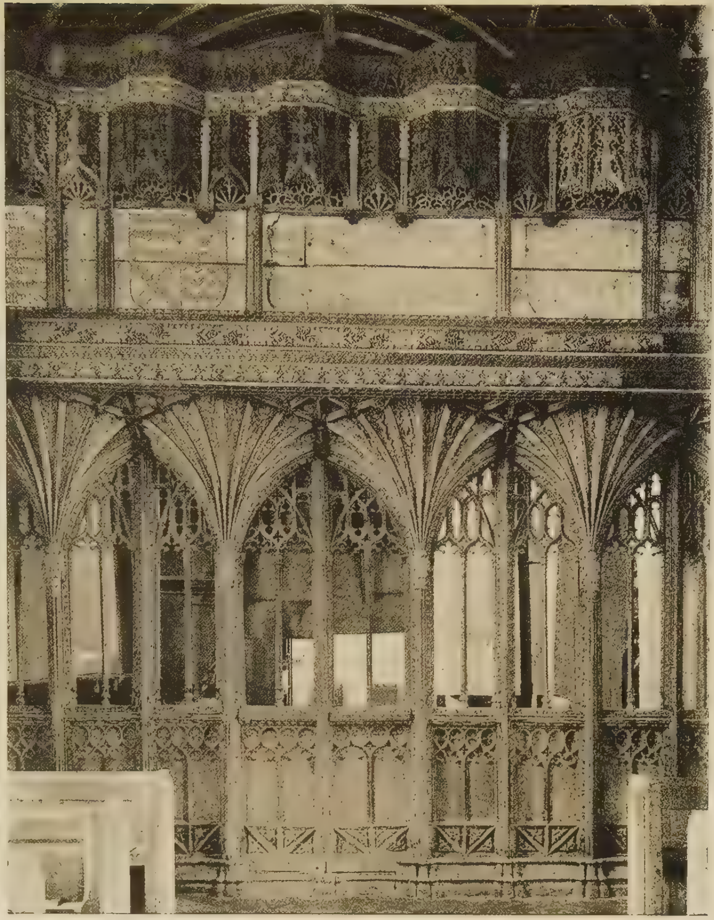


LLANRWST, DENBIGH, TABERNACLE WORK

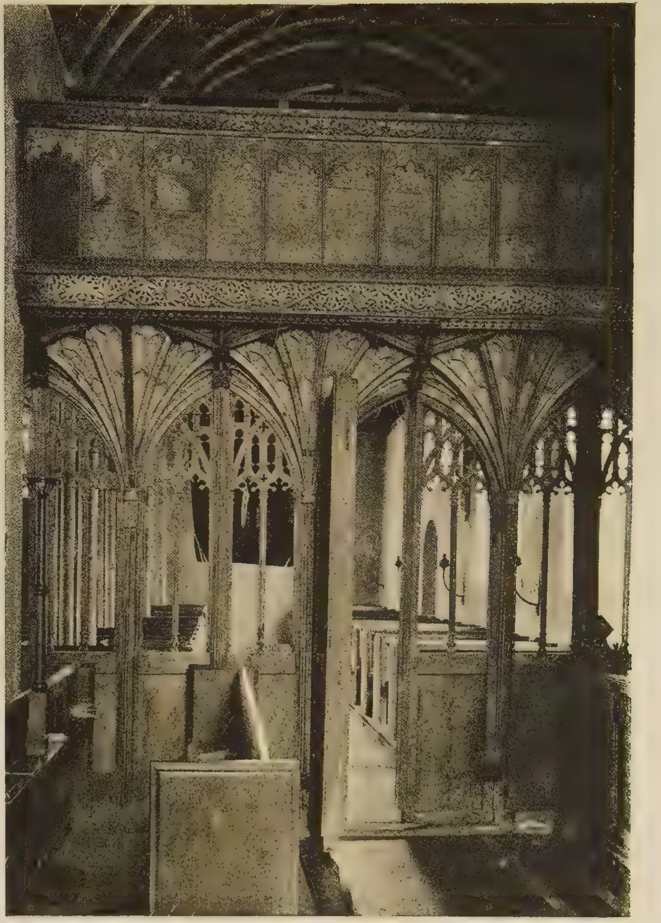


MONTGOMERY, EXCEPTIONAL ; COMPARE ATTLEBOROUGH

VAULTED SCREENS—EARLY SIXTEENTH-CENTURY DEVON TYPES

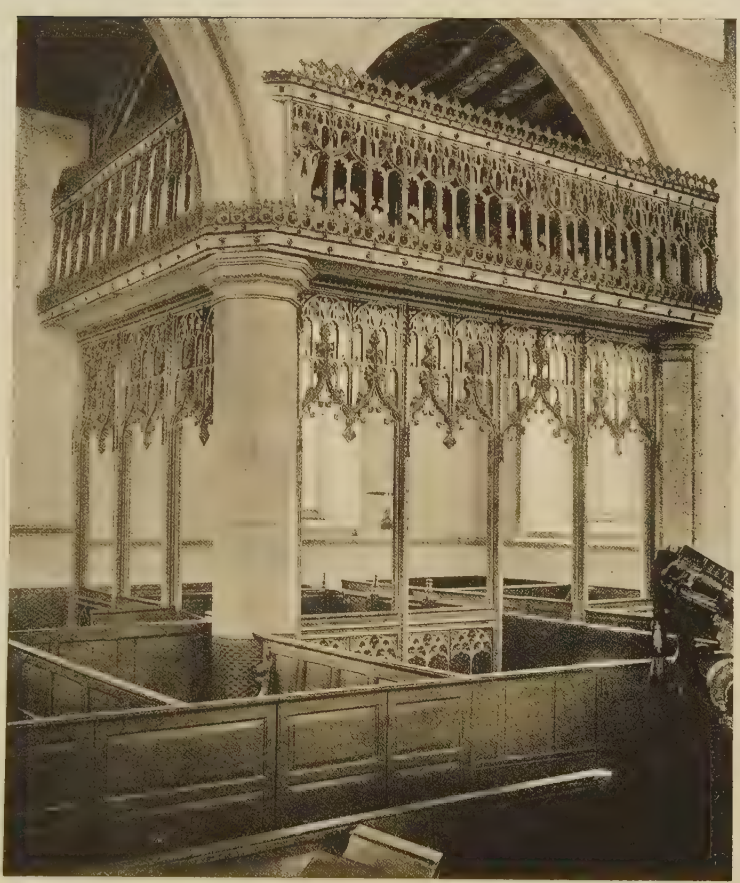


ATHERINGTON, N. DEVON, WEST SIDE

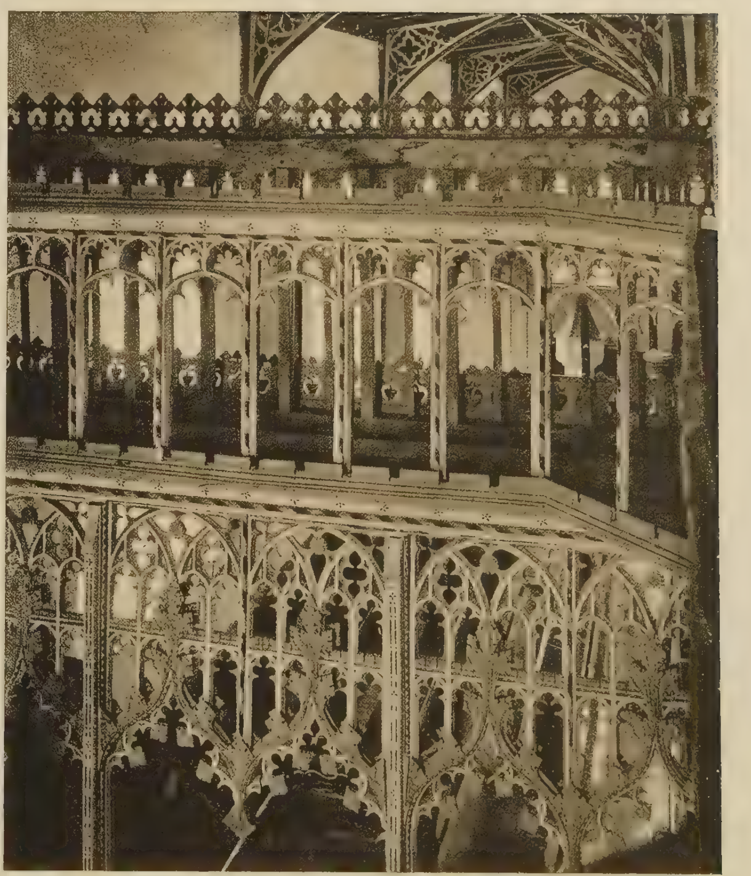


ATHERINGTON, N. DEVON, EAST SIDE

THE ROOD-LOFT—EAST ANGLIAN TYPES

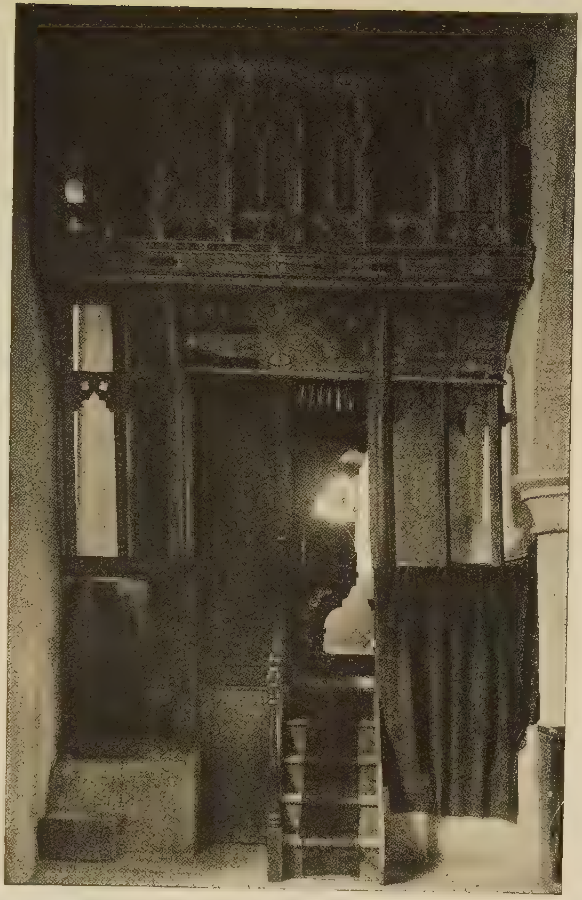


DENNINGTON, SUFFOLK, DOUBLE LIGHT TRACERY



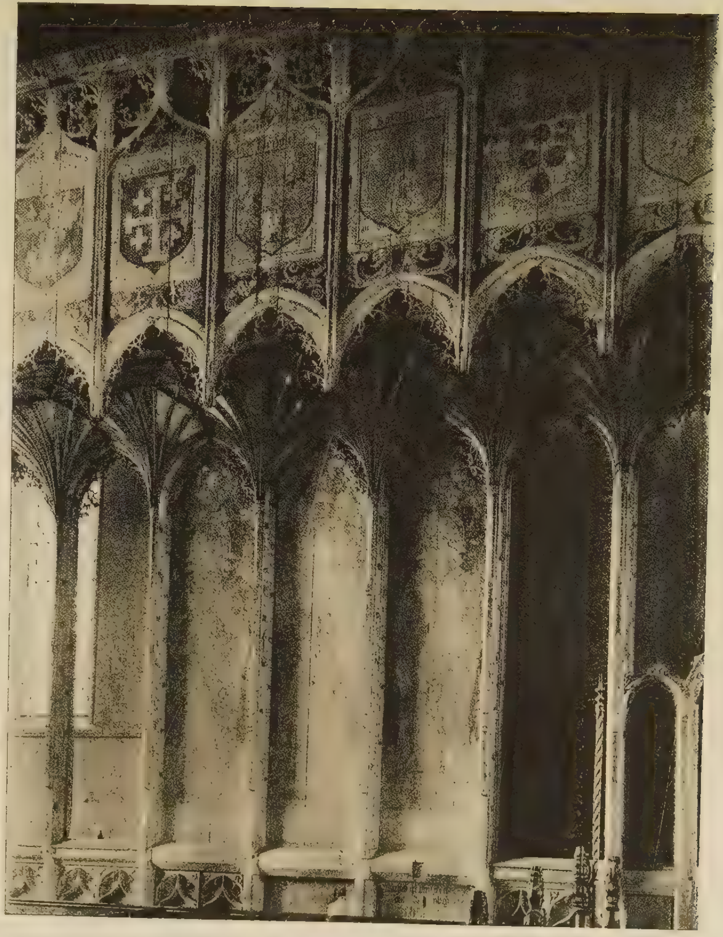
DENNINGTON, EAST SIDE, OPEN PANELS, TRACERY HEADS

THE ROOD-LOFT—EASTERN TYPES

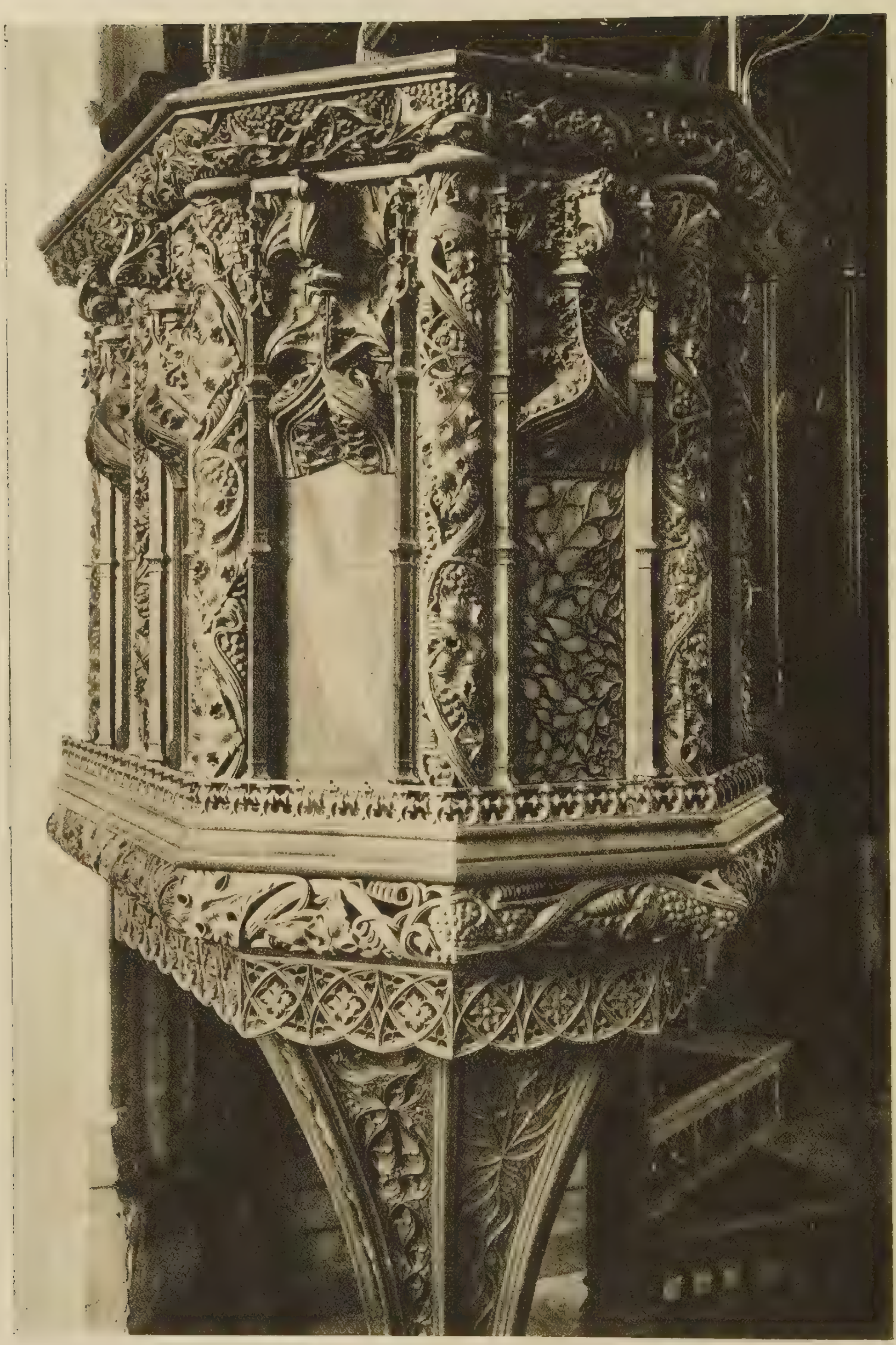


[“Victoria County Histories,’ *photo.*

OAKLEY, BEDS., DOUBLE LIGHT TRACERY



ATTLEBOROUGH, NORFOLK, CONCEALED BRESSUMMER



KENTON, DEVON, LATE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

VI

NAVE

PULPITS

There is documentary evidence of the use of pulpits in English churches as early as the twelfth century, and there are refectory pulpits of the thirteenth century at Chester and Beaulieu, but no wooden church pulpit of an earlier date than *c.* 1330 is known to exist. There is an interesting example of this period at Fulbourne, Cambs. (286), but fourteenth-century pulpits are extremely rare; other examples of the end of the century occur at Upper Winchendon, Bucks.; Stanton, Glos.; and Evenlode, Glos. Most of those formerly assigned to this period by archæologists really date from the fifteenth century, when the use of pulpits became more general, though it is probable that they were provided in only a quarter of the churches. At the present day the county is fortunate that can boast of more than ten examples.

Position.—The restorers usually found the pulpit fixed against the first pier west of the screen, sometimes on the north side, sometimes on the south. This position is undoubtedly the most convenient, and has centuries of usage behind it; but, obsessed by ecclesiological theories now known to be erroneous, they insisted on moving the pulpit a bay further east, fixing it against the screen, generally on the north or gospel side. At the present time one rarely finds an ancient timber pulpit in its original place; stone pulpits are not so easily moved, and are more often found *in situ*.

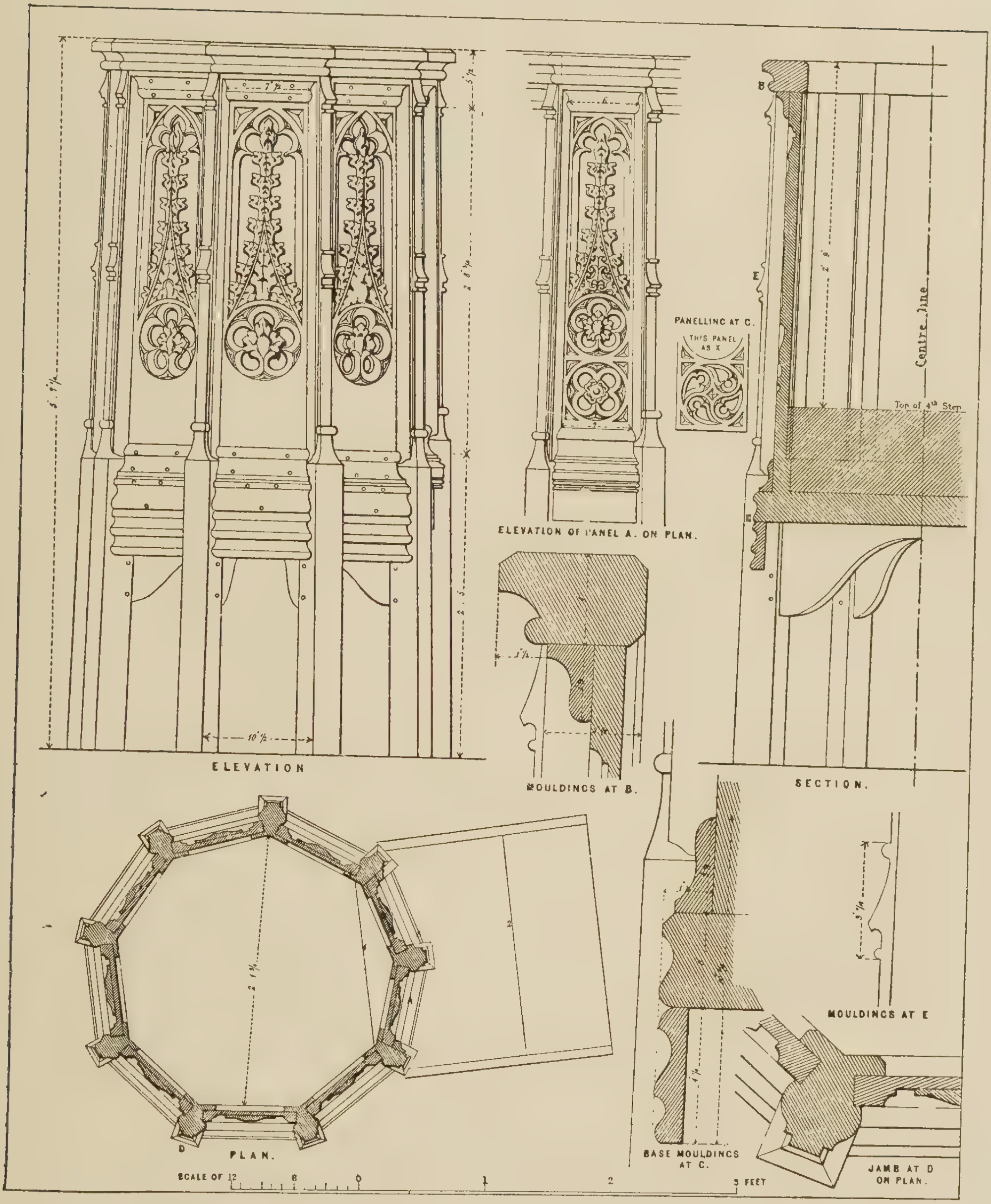
Size.—Old pulpits are beautifully proportioned to the buildings in which they are placed. In a small church they are frequently no more than 2 feet in diameter inside; in the great church of St Michael at Coventry the pulpit, now discarded, was no less than 3 feet 4½ inches. The floor is seldom less than 4 feet above floor level, and is frequently more; at Coventry it was actually 7 feet 6 inches. The sides vary from 3 feet 3 inches to 3 feet 6 inches in height. It is to these tall and slender proportions that the mediæval pulpits owe much of their charm; indeed it is quite impossible to design a beautiful pulpit of the absurdly bulky dimensions considered correct nowadays.

Plan.—Judging from ancient manuscripts, square pulpits were in general use in the Middle Ages, but this shape, though convenient and constructional, gave way to the polygon, which is certainly a more beautiful form. The hexagon is the most common shape, but the octagon is almost equally popular, and gives a taller and better proportion to the panels of the sides. The dodecagon gives long and graceful panels, and occurs at Selworthy, Somerset; while at Long Sutton the wood pulpit is a sixteen-sided polygon, standing upon an octagonal stone base. In a few instances the sill and rail are hollow-sided polygons on plan; this gives a fine effect, as at Cockington, Devon (295). The polygon is often incomplete; for instance, five sides of an octagon form a serviceable and economical pulpit, and sometimes the pier or wall against which the pulpit is placed serves as one of the sides. Again, the polygon may be irregular; at Wenden, Essex (277), the pulpit has seven large and two small sides, and at East Hagbourne, Berks. (291), narrow and wide sides alternate.

As a rule mediæval pulpits were provided with doors, produced by hinging one or two of the sides. These have often been removed, and may occasionally be found lying in belfries or vestries, as at South Creake, Norfolk.

The stairs by which the pulpit was reached have almost invariably been destroyed. It is probable that in most cases they were mere ladders, though in the case of the well-known stone pulpit of St Peter's, Wolverhampton, the stairs are very elaborate, and similar fine stairs in wood may possibly have existed at one time. Charming post-Reformation stairs have sometimes escaped the restorers; those at Ipplepen, Devon (295), dating from the early eighteenth century, are especially good.

ANGLE-POSTS PROLONGED INTO LEGS



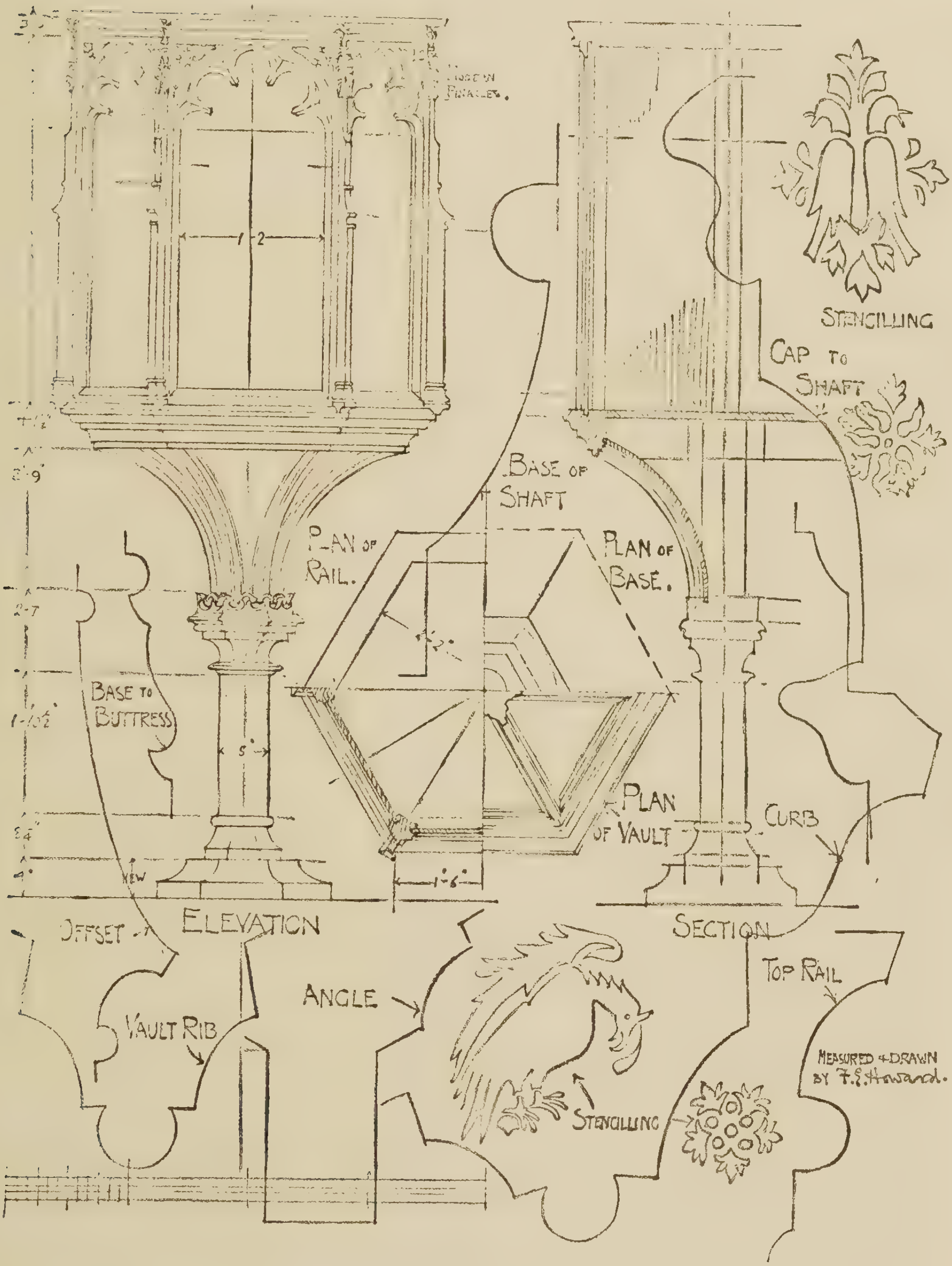
WENDEN, ESSEX

F. T. DOLLMAN, *Del.*

Construction.—There are three distinct ways of constructing the actual pulpit. A few, like Mellor and Chivelstone (294), are carved out of a solid log of oak. This primitive method of construction is by no means a sign of early date; Chivelstone has shields decorated with linen-fold pattern, an almost infallible proof of late fifteenth or sixteenth century origin. In some cases the sides are each worked out of a separate slab; this method is used in a fine group of Somerset pulpits, of which Queen Camel (293) is the type. But the most general way of making a pulpit is to frame it up with sill, rail, and angle-posts. It is no easy matter to joint up such a polygonal framework, and several varieties of construction may be found. There are a few instances in which the angle-posts run through, and the sill and rail are tenoned into them, but more often the angle-posts are tenoned into the horizontal members. A modern joiner would joint the rail and sill at each angle; the mediæval craftsman preferred to get at least two sides out of the same plank, and arranged the joints in the middle of the sides, which was more laborious but stronger. The panels of some old pulpits have been removed to suit modern ideas. There is, however, no doubt that in mediæval times the close-panels were always panelled.

In the illuminations the pulpits generally stand upon legs formed by prolonging the angle-posts; an example of this type exists at Wenden, having nine legs. Another at St Mary de Lode, Gloucester, has six legs panelled up. An early method in use at all times is to support the pulpit on an octagonal base of solid masonry; the Burlingham pulpit is a good instance of this. It is a safe but unimaginative solution of the problem. But the final and most beautiful form of base is that in which the pulpit is supported upon a slender stem, branching out as a spreading capital or a polygonal coving, as at Castleacre. The capital is in most cases a solid affair into which the shaft is housed. The coving is of more elaborate construction; the stem runs right through the coving and supports the floor joists, while arched ribs, springing from a capital half-way up, radiate to the sill or curb of the pulpit. These ribs usually go to the angles, but an intermediate rib sometimes springs to the middle of each side.

EAST ANGLIAN STYLE WITH SLENDER STEM



CASTLEACRE, NORFOLK

The space between the ribs is often filled in with a thin panel, or may be left open. The shaft generally has a moulded base worked in the solid to give stability, and is probably let into the floor of the church. The beautiful but almost wholly restored pulpit, now in the nave of Westminster Abbey church, has a spreading base built up like the coving. In Devon it is not unusual to find the coving springing directly from a moulded stone base; it is likely that these pulpits once possessed shafts, but their loss has not altogether spoilt their outline.

Testers, now often regarded as seventeenth-century inventions, were often used, and a few examples have survived, notably Edlesborough, Bucks. (288), which is octagonal on plan, in the form of a tabernacled spire, suspended above the pulpit. At Fotheringhay the pulpit has retained its panelled back, from which a richly vaulted canopy projects. This was evidently the foundation of a spire like that of Edlesborough, but unfortunately this part of the work has been destroyed. At Cold Ashton, Glos., where the pulpit is of wood on a stone base, and is partly recessed into the wall, the canopy is of stone elaborately carved in the manner of a pinnacle, projecting from the wall. Radley, Berks., has a beautiful tester with flamboyant panels, but this is said to have come from the old houses of Parliament, where it formed part of the Speaker's chair.

Decoration.—When the pulpit stands upon a stone base the lower member is a sill, and is treated as such, with the upper surface weathered. It is usually moulded only, but at Halberton (294) paterae are carved upon it. If the base is a slender stem with a spreading capital the lower member forms the upper part of it, and is moulded as an abacus, as at Queen Camel (293). In the numerous class with coved stems this member is a curb, and the mouldings resemble those of the bressummers of screens, and like them may be decorated with trails, crestings, or battlements. At Edlesborough it is kept very flat, and designed as a little parapet with string and coping.

The frame is generally moulded, though in some instances a more or less elaborate trail runs round each panel; this is very common in the West. At Halberton a broad splay frames the panel, and is decorated with large square flowers at intervals. There is a tendency to reduce the frame to the smallest possible dimensions in the eastern counties, while in the west it is strongly emphasised. Thus at Ipplepen (295) the pulpit is a version in wood of the local type of stone pulpit, and has a very massive frame encrusted with a delightful vine trail carved in the solid.

The angles are often ornamented with small buttresses, having moulded bases and offsets. These sometimes die on to the curb, as at Handborough (40), while at Cockington (295) it is actually curved out to receive them, but in many cases no attempt to stop them is made, and they are simply corbelled off, as at Edlesborough. These little buttresses are used in the fourteenth-century Fulbourne (286) pulpit and continued to be used to the last, except in Devon and Cornwall. They are most general in the Midland and eastern counties, and are sometimes very delicate, as at Burnham Norton (287); sometimes of massive proportions, as at Edlesborough. Handborough is an instance of a simple treatment with only one offset, not returned, and a simple moulded and returned base, while at Rossington, Yorks. (290), the buttresses are most ornate, with base and offsets returned, and slender pinnacles rising from the gablets midway. The Cockington (295) angle buttresses are square in plan, covered with surface decoration of the honeycomb variety, terminating in large pinnacles. In a few pulpits a middle rail is introduced; Halberton (294) is perhaps the earliest instance; Fotheringhay and the Westminster pulpit are much later.

In East Anglia the cornice is kept very plain and small, but in the West it is frequently ornamented with trails and crestings. Chivelstone has no fewer than four decorative bands in this position. An inscription in raised black-letter round the top of the pulpit is not unusual. In the North, at Rossington, Yorks., and Heighington, Durham (291), it is a request for prayers for the souls of the donors.

The treatment of the panels is perhaps the most important part of pulpit design. The plainest examples have traceried heads to their panels. At Castleacre (279) the tracery takes the form of cinquefoiled arches with foliaged spandrels; at East Hagbourne, Berks. (291), the spandrels are traceried. Fishtoft (289) has tracery in two orders with a crocketted ogee, while that at Tattershall (289) is delightfully foliaged, and has stiff rectilinear tracery in the spandrels. If the panels are wide they may be divided by a muntin into two divisions; the tracery then follows the design of a two-light window, as at Potterne (292). At Rossington and in other examples a traceried band is introduced at the base of the panel, forming a kind of plinth. Some pulpits have their panels completely covered with tracery, either planted on, as at Landbeach (286), Southwold (287), and Handborough (40), or worked in the solid, as at Bridgwater. There is something not wholly pleasing about this treatment, though in some cases the effect is very rich. It is characteristic of a group of West Somerset pulpits, of which Monksilver (292) is a good example.

The most elaborate treatment of all is to form a niche in each panel. This is most common in the West. At Cockington the canopy is carved out of a solid block, and fixed to the head of the panel, but at Ipplepen vault, archlets, and pinnacles are all separate and pegged together; Edlesborough is an eastern version of this method. The Coleridge niches are like those of the Devon rood-lofts and pier casings, formed by two pierced and traceried boards, fixed at an angle with one another, with a planted ogee arch, delicately crocketted. The Queen Camel canopies bow forward and are segmental on plan; those at Halberton are caught back in a manner peculiar to Devon.

The images which once peopled the niches rarely survive. The pulpit at Trull, Somerset (293), is exceptionally fortunate in retaining statuettes of St John the Evangelist and the four Latin doctors in its principal niches, and twelve other little figures, intended perhaps for the twelve apostles, in those of the angle-posts. Moreover, angels are worked into the canopies. It must be confessed that these are not very favourable specimens of mediæval figure sculpture, but they are very successful as decoration. It is interesting to compare this pulpit with the East Anglian examples at Castleacre and Burnham Norton, which have the four Doctors painted in their panels. At Halberton the niches are purely decorative, and there are no pedestals.

The stone bases are generally of doubtful antiquity. They seem to have been treated in most cases as a high plinth with a moulding or chamfer round the upper edge, and were rather larger in diameter than the pulpits they supported. Burford, Oxon., has a modern stone base to its pulpit, which takes the form of a short octagonal pier with cap and base. The effect is fairly satisfactory, and there seems to be no reason to doubt that this was occasionally done in the Middle Ages. Long Sutton is a very slender example influenced by the wood stems.

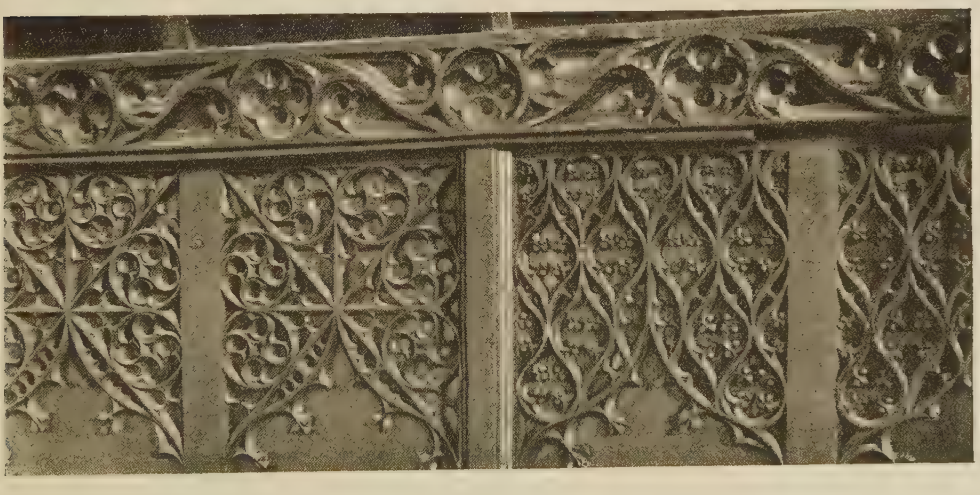
The design of the wood shafts is far more interesting. The actual shaft may be of six or eight sided section, according to the shape of the pulpit. In the eastern counties it is not infrequently circular, though the capitals and bases are invariably angular. A gorgeous circular pulpit stem was discovered during a restoration at Diss, Norfolk. The circular shaft stands on a square base with pinnacles filling up the angles, and is flanked by four buttresses of bold projection supporting small carved beasts. These are much damaged, but were probably intended for the evangelistic symbols. The capital is moulded and embattled, and leaves decorate the bell. A simpler treatment is more usual. In the eastern counties the shafts are very slender, and leave no room for decoration; in the West they are stouter, and are sometimes traceried, as at Queen Camel (293), where the capital expands to serve as a base to the pulpit. The base of the fine pulpit at Wooten Wawen, Warwickshire, is a plain octagonal shaft of large proportions, with very simply moulded capital and base. Here again there is no coving, and the pulpit stands directly on the shaft capital. The beautiful destroyed pulpit of Wolvercote, Oxon., also had a stem of this description, most elaborately moulded.

However, a slender shaft supporting a spreading coving is the most common, and also the most beautiful form of base. There are generally as many radiating ribs as there are sides to the pulpit, but sometimes intermediate ribs are introduced. Curiously enough there do not appear to be any examples of lierne ribs. The ribs vary in size. In East Anglia and most of the Midland counties they are small and insignificant, while in the West they are massive. Some ribs have only a hollow moulding, but an additional bead or ogee is often used. The ribs at Rossington (290) are exceptionally elaborate and deeply undercut. In most cases they mitre with each other at the springing, and abut against the lower member of the curb which is moulded to receive them. The panels are frequently left plain, but in very rich pulpits they may be traceried. This treatment does not appear to be a characteristic of any particular local school. It is rarely found in the Midlands, but occurs at Southwold, Suffolk (287), and at Ipplepen, in Devon. It is usual for the lines of the tracery to be based on the radiating lines of the ribs, but at Kenton, Devon (274), the design is wildly flamboyant and extremely elaborate. The outline of the rib is an important point. In Devon they are sharply pitched, though the curve is well marked. In the Midlands the pitch is rarely so acute and the curve more pronounced. The same is true of most East Anglian pulpits, though at Burnham Norton (287) and Tattershall (289) the ribs, of very flat curve, are sharply pitched.

Mediæval pulpits have usually passed through many vicissitudes since their erection. They were sometimes incorporated into the three-deckers of the Georgian era, many losing their stems in the process. In the early nineteenth century a few were enormously stilted to meet the requirements of galleries, like that of All Saints, Sudbury, Suffolk, as shown in Dollman's book. A great deal of damage was done during the nineteenth century, though there were a few creditable restorations. When we find a pulpit almost entirely renewed, it must be remembered that it was probably extricated from the ruins of the three-decker, and may have been mutilated long before the much abused nineteenth century; moreover, casing an old oak pulpit up in deal panelling induces rot, and some were in a dreadful condition when found. On the other hand, what has become of the lovely pulpit at Wolvercote, Oxon., with its graceful tracery and linen panels, an engraving of which appears in the "Glossary of Architecture"? And why do so few of those illustrated in Dollman's work exist at the present day? When galleries came into disrepute and were removed, numbers of pulpits were reduced in height.

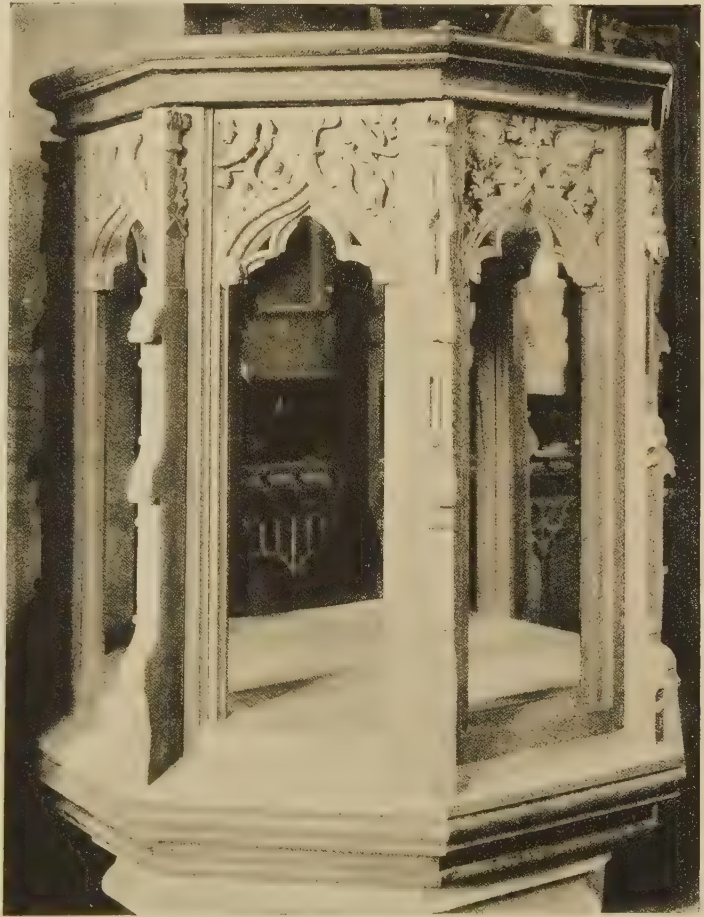
Again, modern methods of preaching demand room for dramatic gesture, for which the old pulpits were quite unsuited, being of the smallest possible dimensions. Consequently one often finds that they have been enlarged, with the result that the only ancient work left is the traceried panel heads, as at Steeple Aston, Oxon., and Padbury, Bucks.

It may be safely assumed that the majority of ancient pulpits were painted. Kenton and Cockington in the West, and Castleacre and Burlingham in the East, are charming specimens of mediæval colour decoration. It was the custom to grain them in imitation of mahogany or other fashionable woods in the Georgian period. Sall and Cawston, in Norfolk, still remain in this melancholy state. At South Creake, in the same county, the pulpit is grained with the exception of one panel, which evidently came against the pier when it was in its original position; the colours are delightful and most harmoniously arranged. Burnham Norton and Castleacre are examples of the decoration of the panels with figure painting; the former pulpit has had its colour work retouched in recent years. This is generally fatal to the beauty and interest of the work, as at Southwold, Burford, Cropredy, and Ipplepen. Most pulpits now show the bare wood; this is generally due to the colour having been pickled off together with eighteenth-century graining at a restoration.

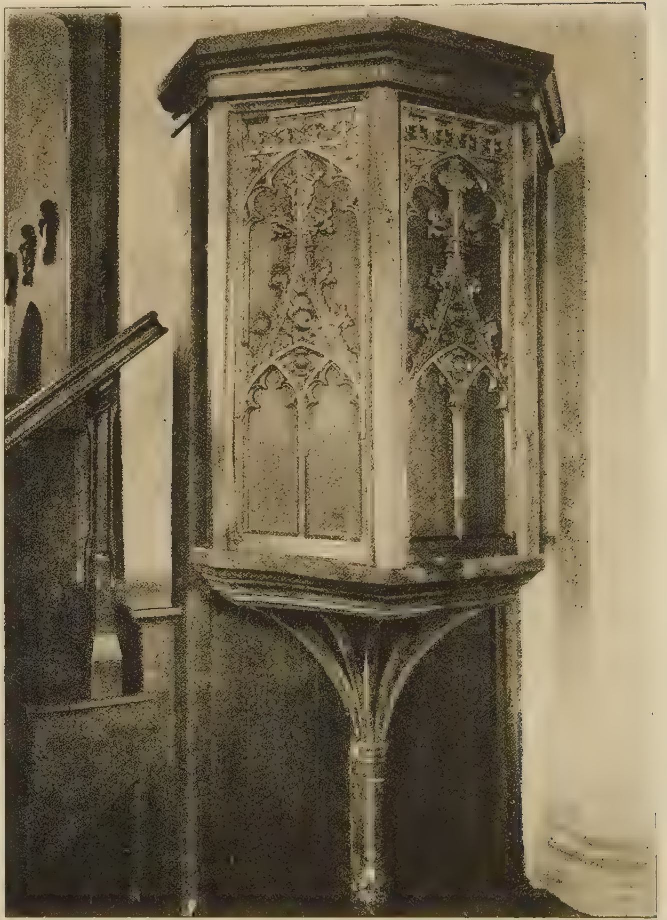


ABERGAVENNY, DETAIL OF STALL BACKS

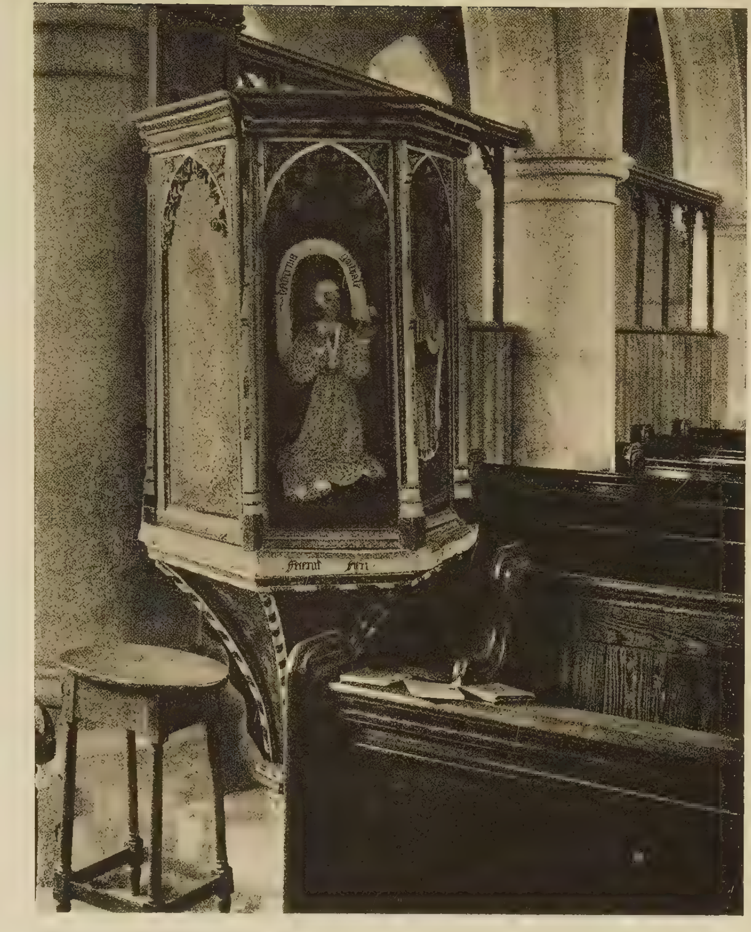
CAMBRIDGESHIRE PULPITS—FOURTEENTH AND FIFTEENTH CENTURY DESIGNS COMPARED



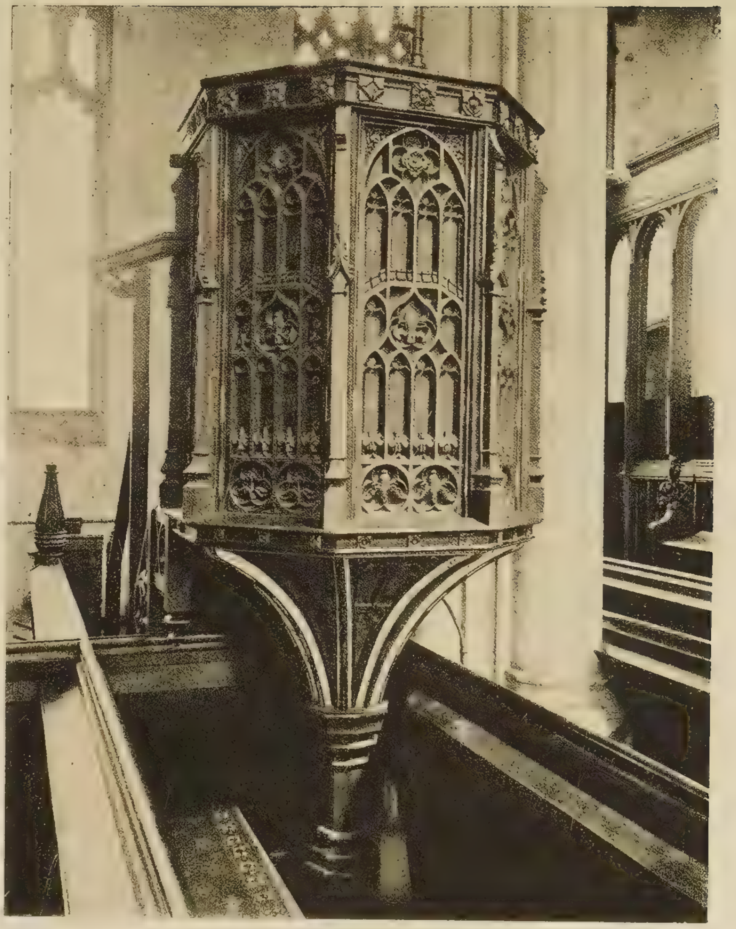
FULBOURNE, CAMBS., REMAINS OF FOURTEENTH-CENTURY PULPIT



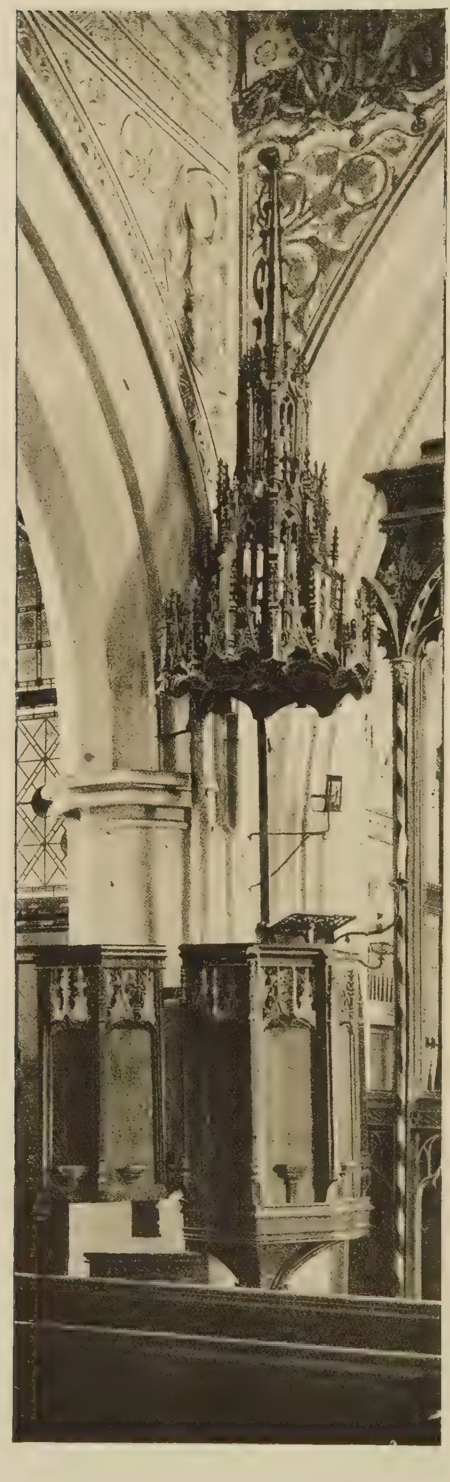
LANDBEACH, CAMBS., MID-FIFTEENTH CENTURY



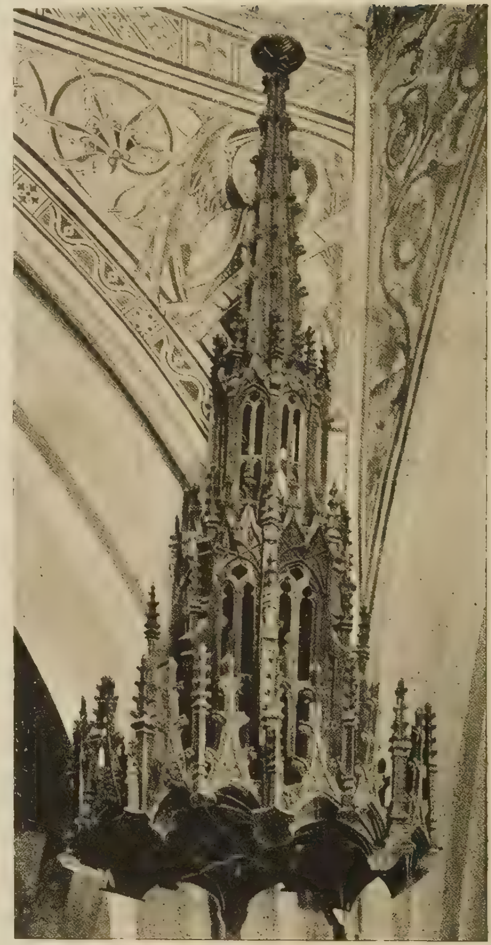
BURNHAM NORTON, NORFOLK, PAINTED SAINTS AND DONORS



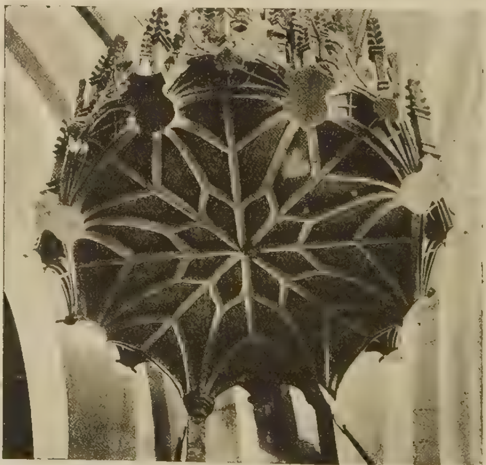
SOUTHWOLD, SUFFOLK, PANELS COMPLETELY TRACERIED



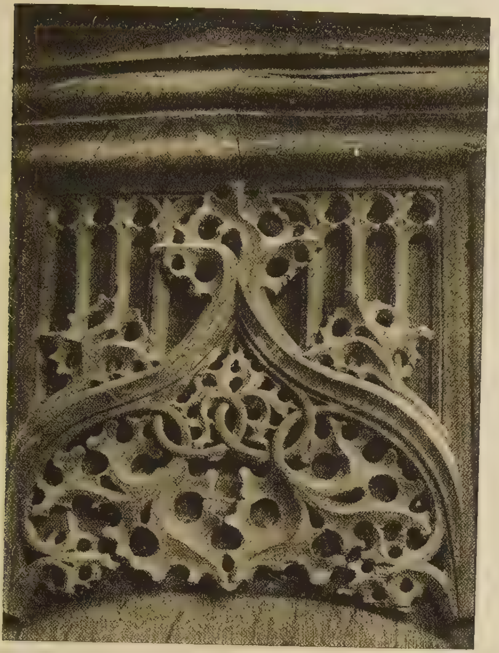
EDLESBOROUGH, BUCKS.



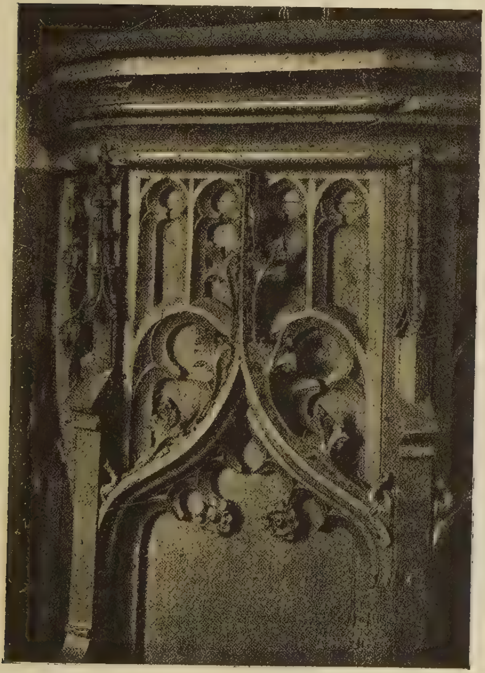
DETAIL OF TESTER



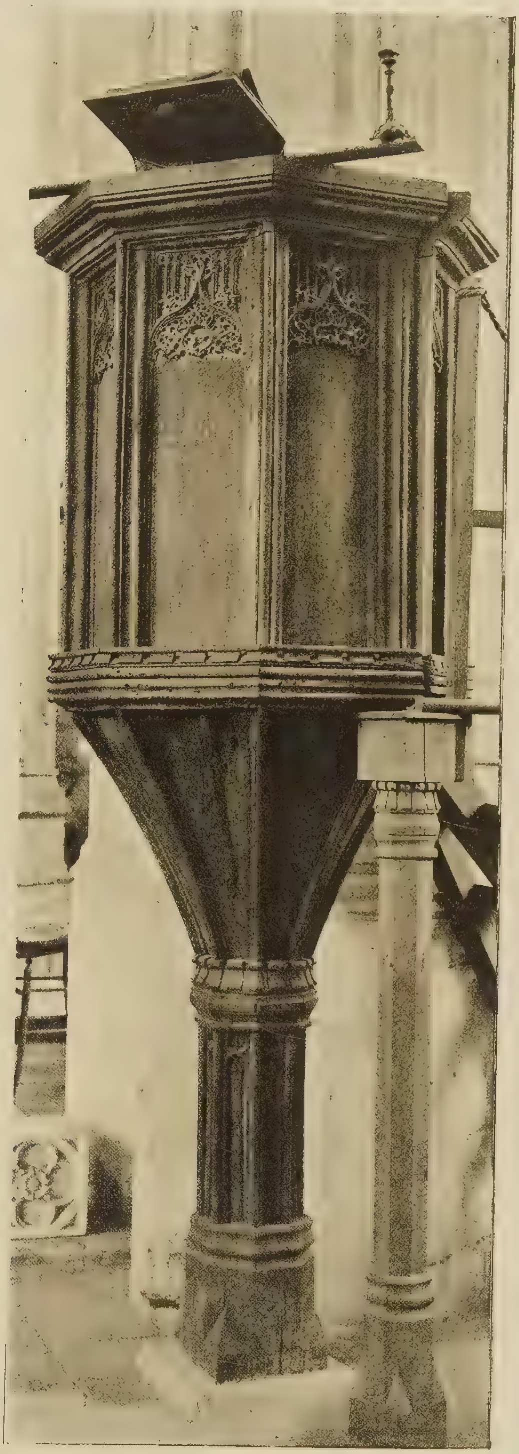
UNDERSIDE OF TESTER



TATTERSHALL, LINCS.,
EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY

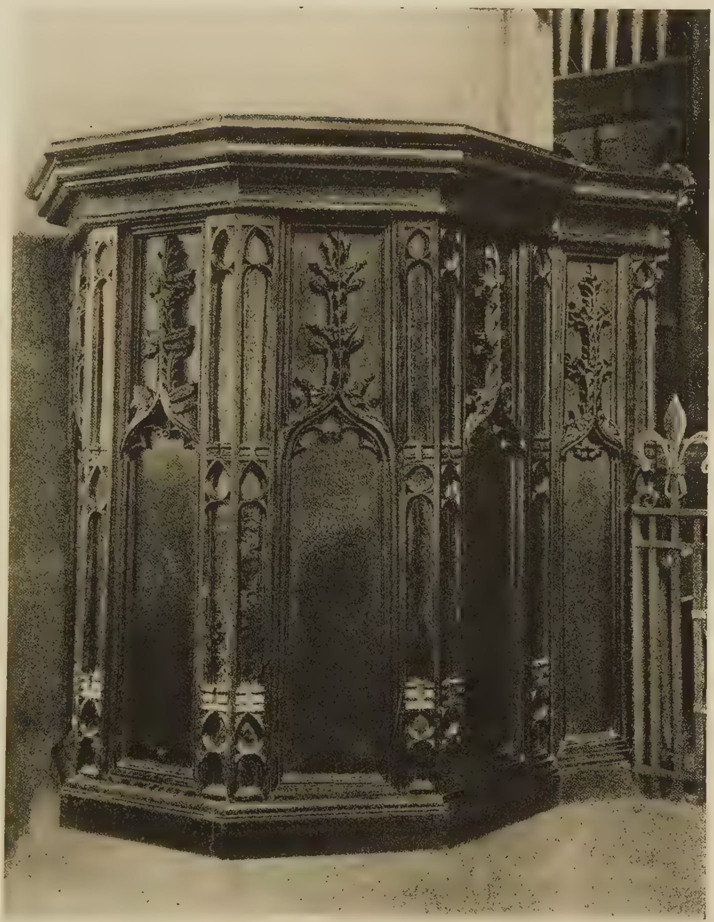


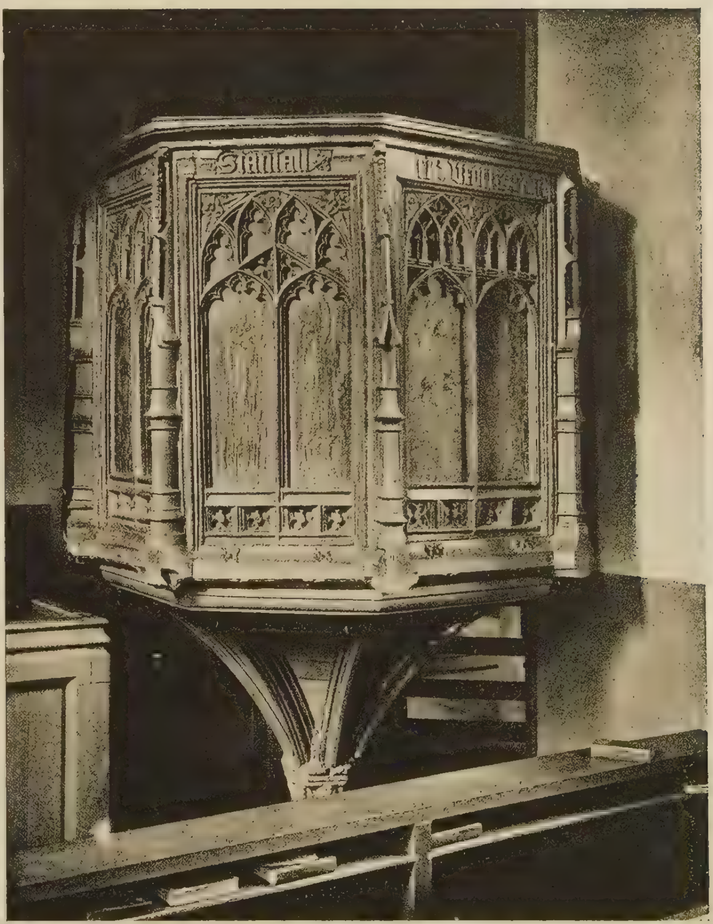
FISHTOFT, LINCS.,
EARLY FIFTEENTH CENTURY

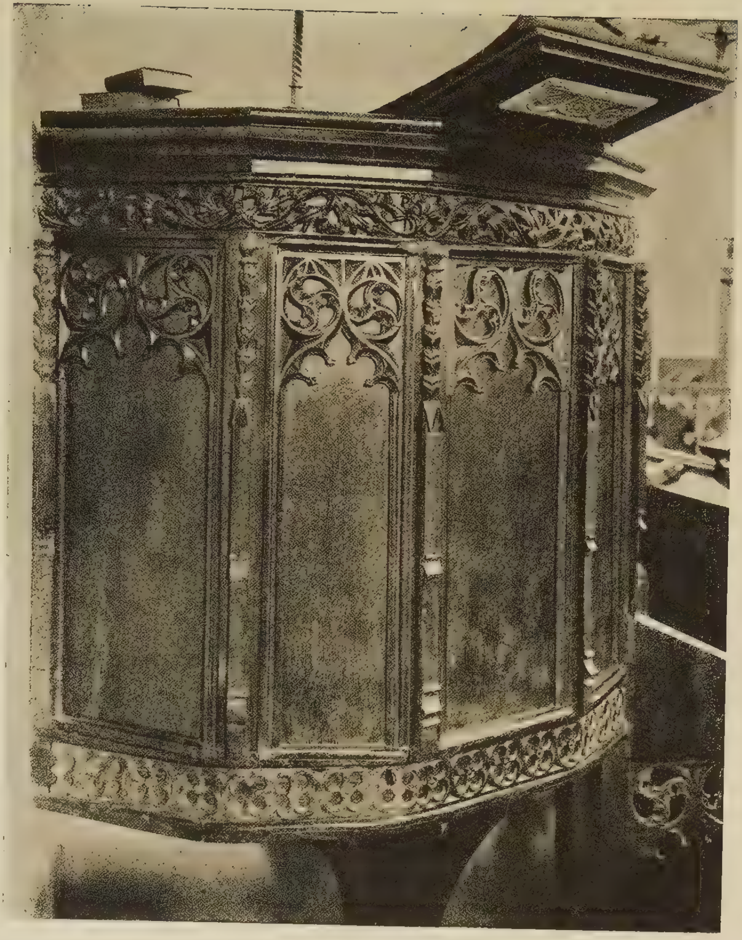


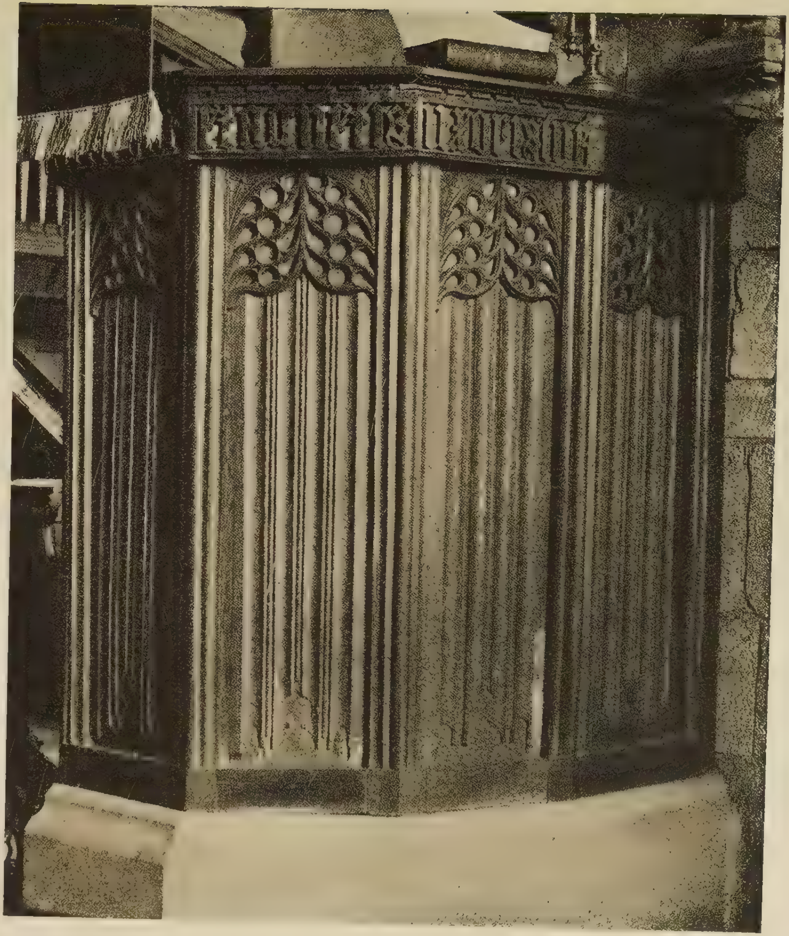
TATTERSHALL, LINCS.

NORTH OF ENGLAND PULPITS

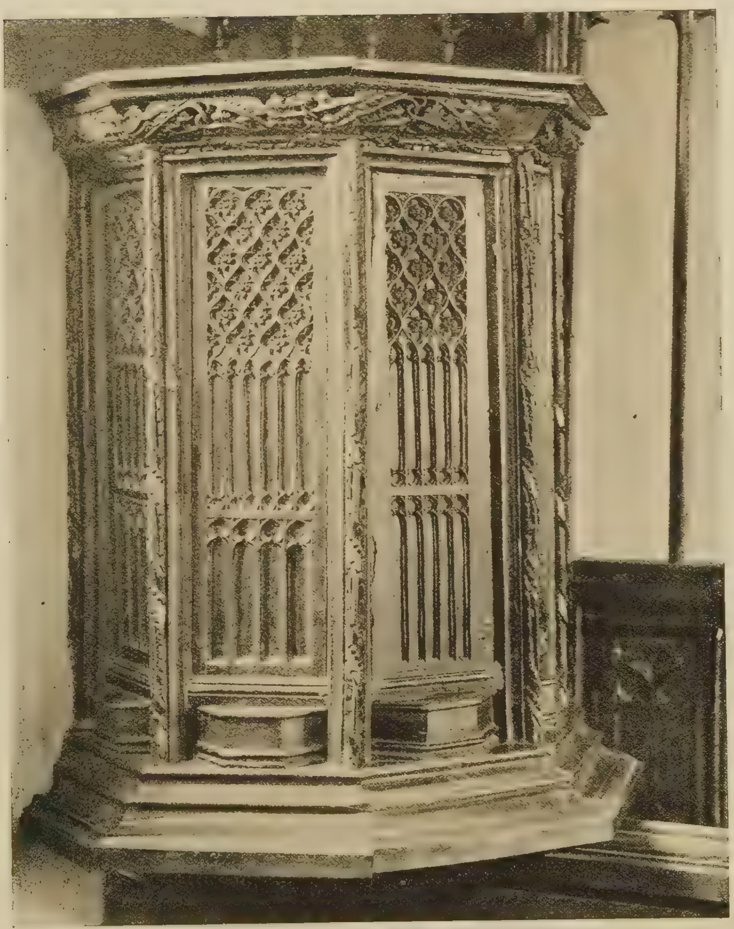

MARBURY, CHESHIRE, PANELLED ANGLES


ROSSINGTON, YORKSHIRE, BUTTRESS ANGLES

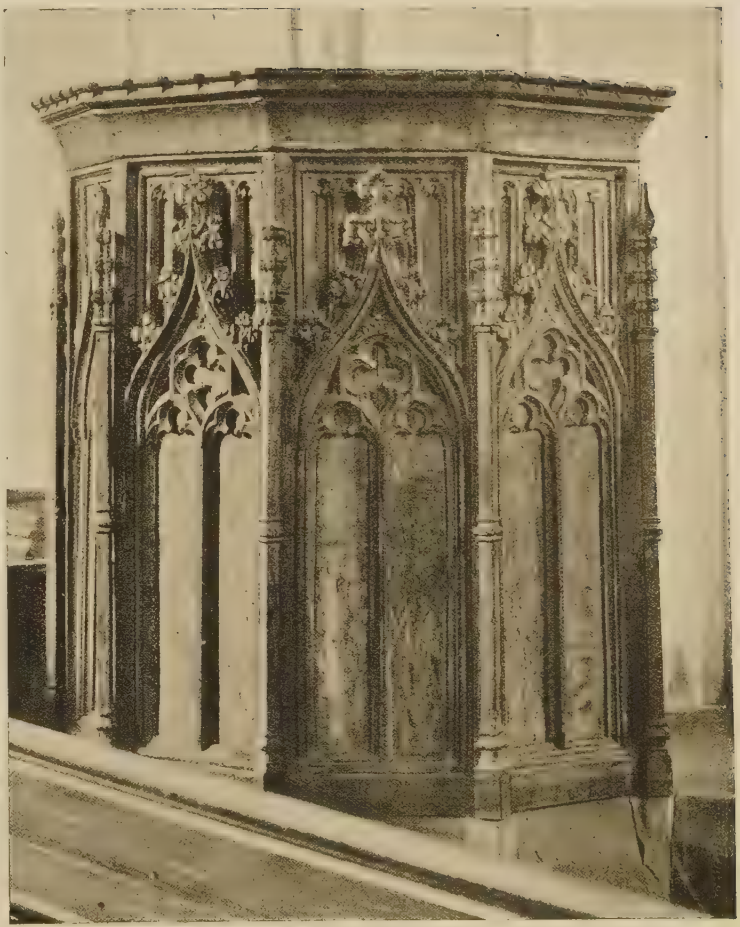

EAST HAGBOURNE, BERKSHIRE, PINNACLED ANGLES


HEIGHINGTON, DURHAM, MOULDED ANGLES

WEST OF ENGLAND PULPITS

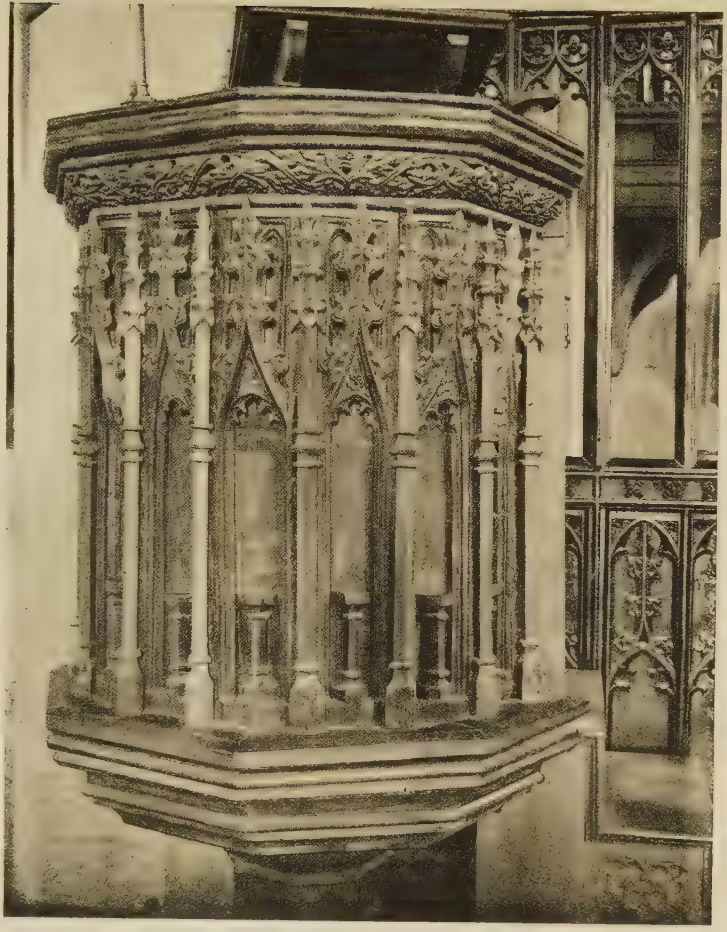


MONKSILVER, SOMERSET

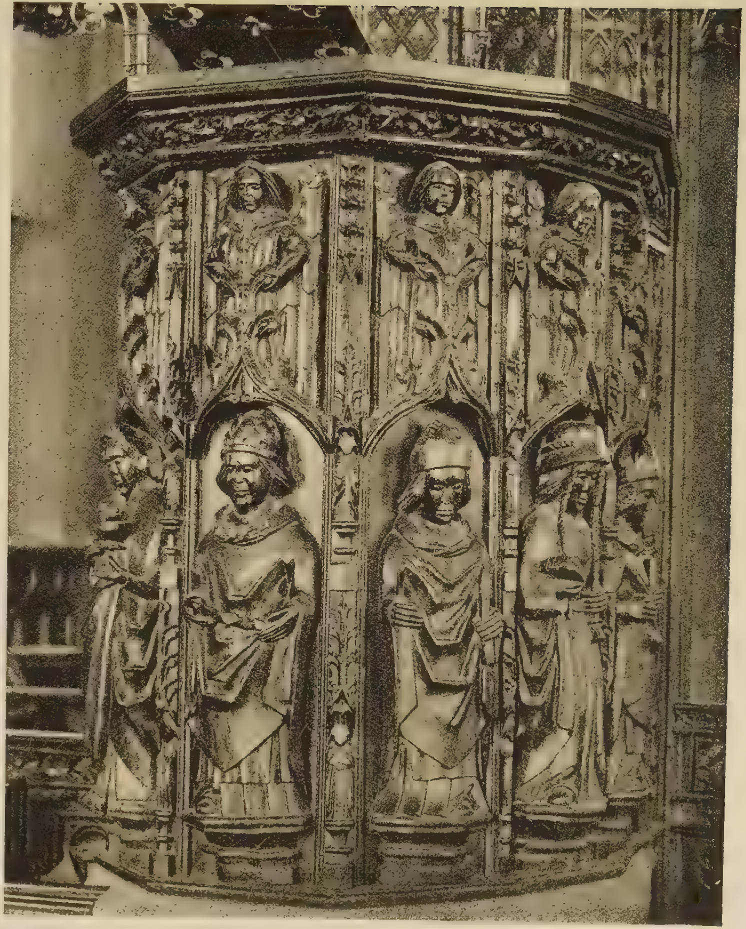


POTTERNE, WILTS.

THE NICHE TREATMENT—SOMERSET VERSIONS

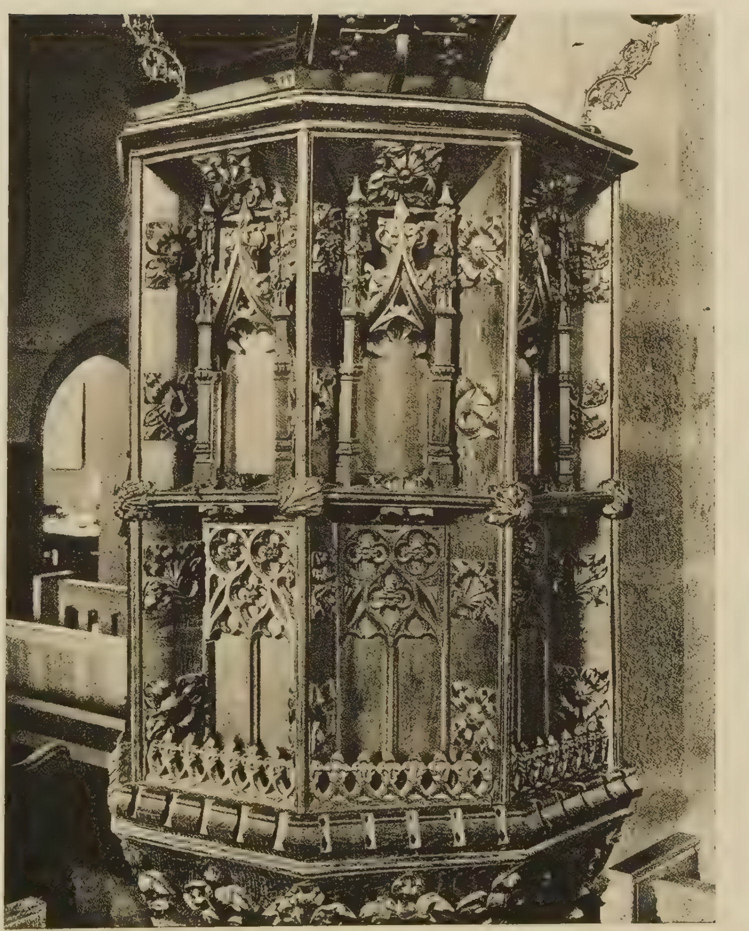


QUEEN CAMEL, SOMERSET, LATE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

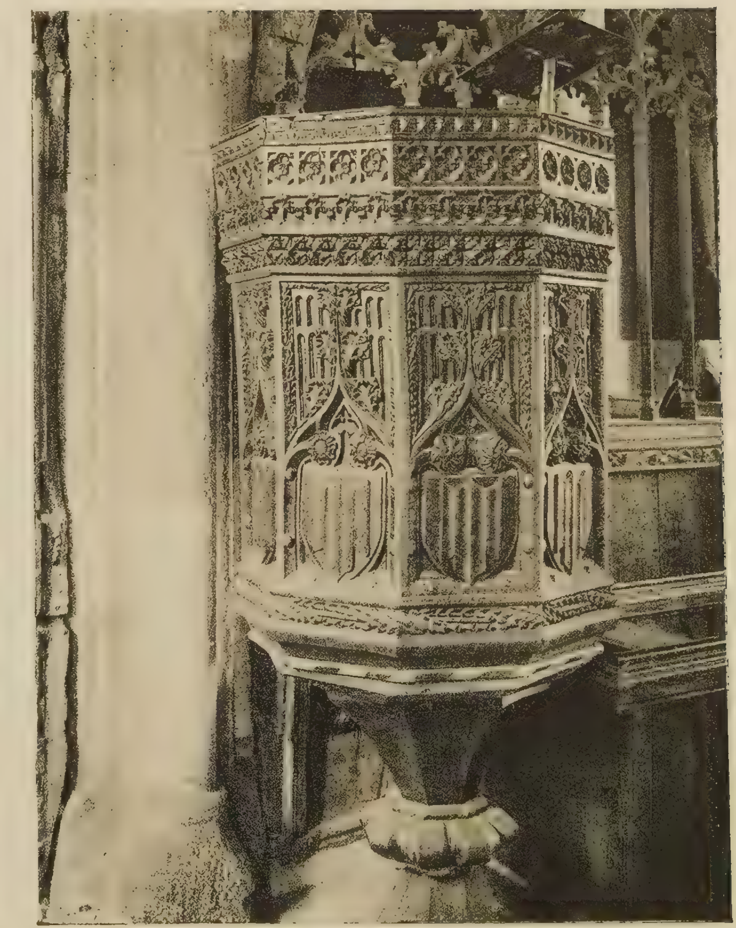


TRULL, SOMERSET, EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY

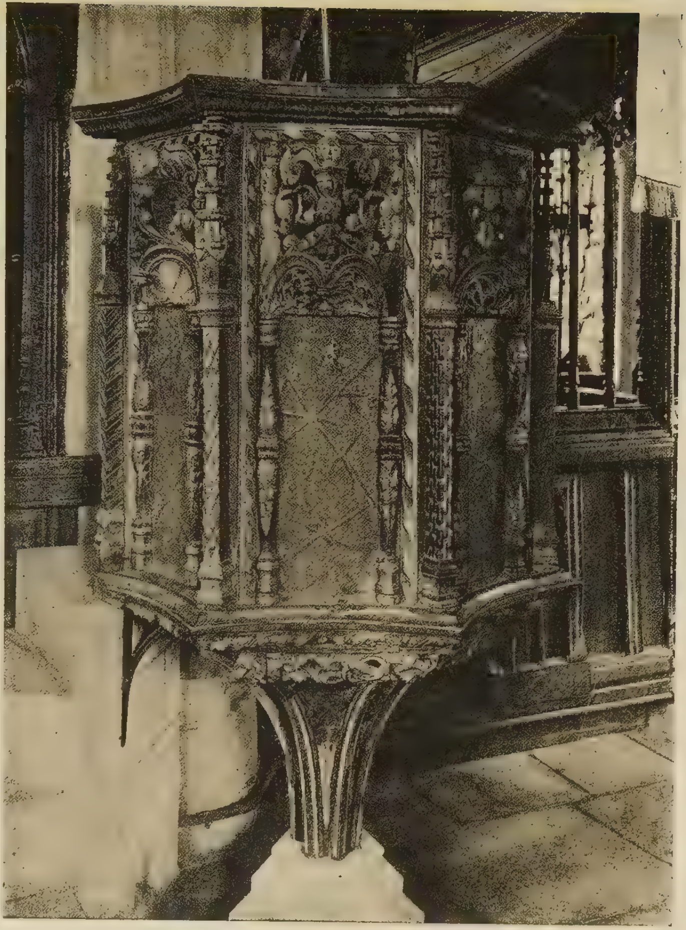
LATE DEVONSHIRE TYPES



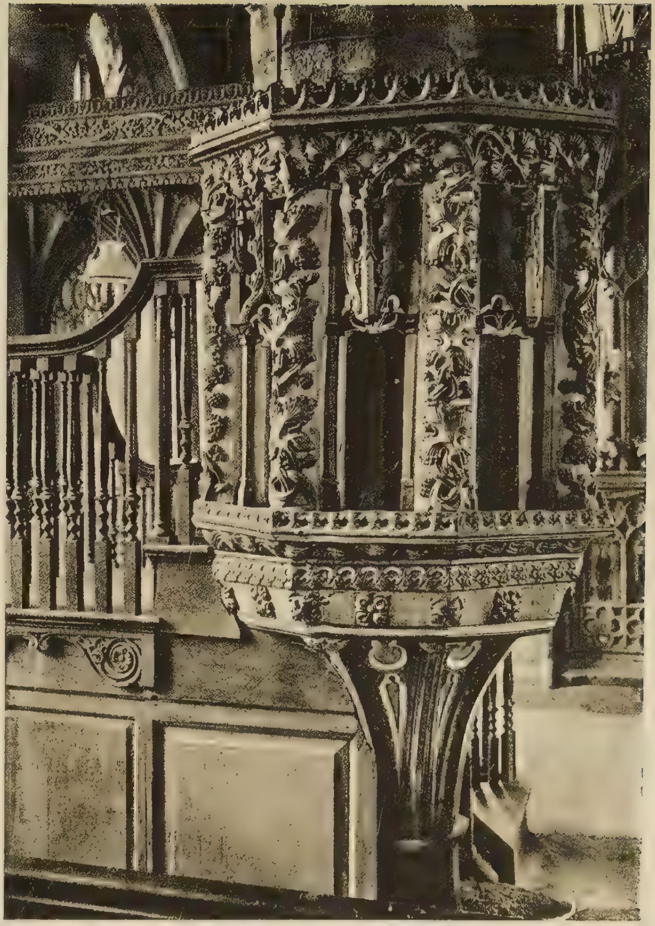
HALBERTON, DEVON



CHIVELSTONE, DEVON

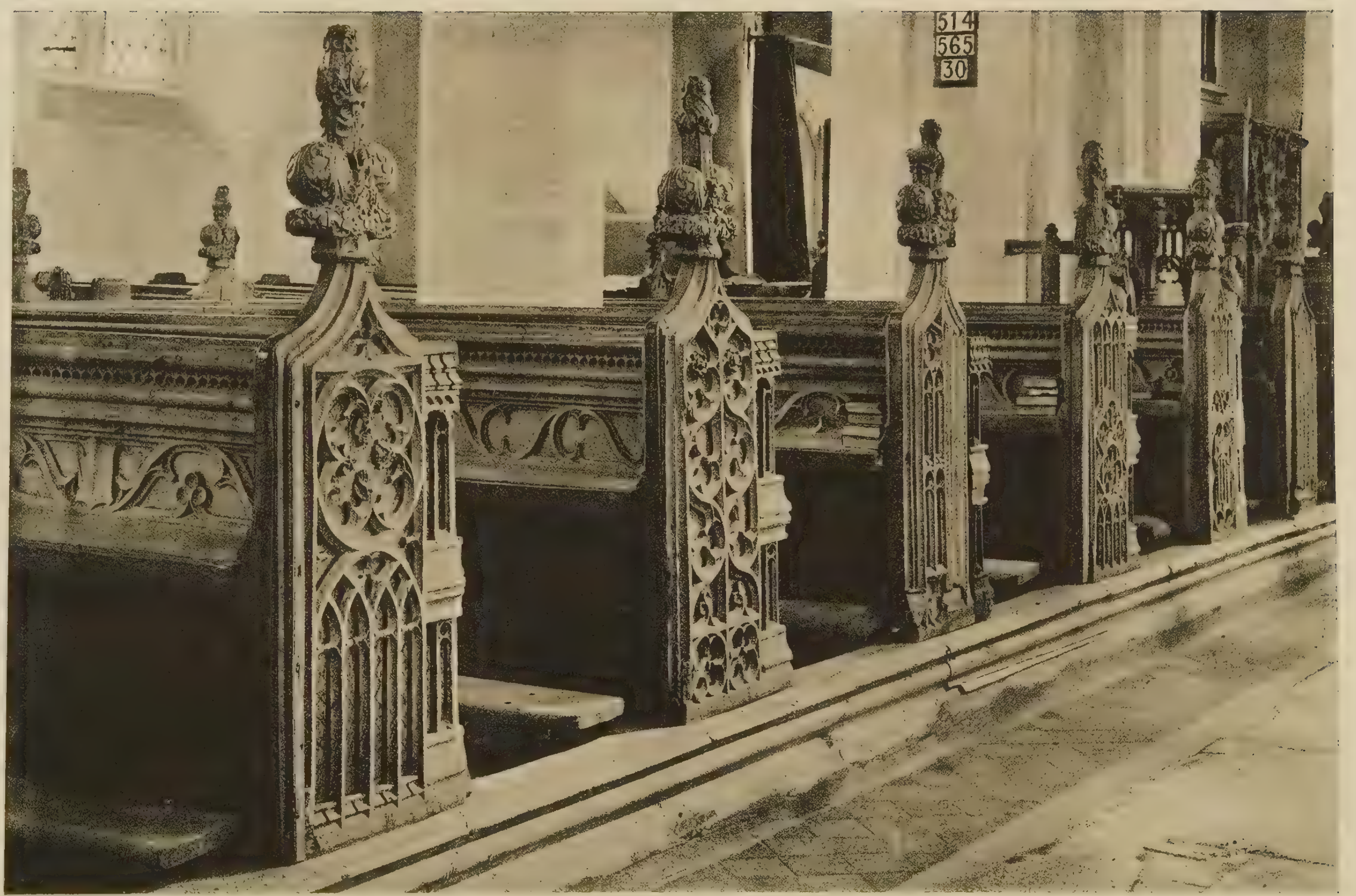


COCKINGTON, DEVON



IPPLEPEN, DEVON

EAST ANGLIAN TYPE



FRESSINGFIELD, SUFFOLK, LATE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

BENCHES

History.—While seats have been provided for the priests and clerks in the chancel, or for the monks and canons in the choir, from the earliest years of Christianity, the provision of benches for the people seems to be of comparatively late introduction. In many churches of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries stone seats are found, either against the side walls, as at Tunstead, Norfolk, or around the piers of the arcade, as at Great Brington. In the first case there is nothing to show that the rest of the space was not pewed, but the latter instance is clear proof that no wood seating was originally intended, even in a great church like Snettisham, where such stone benches occur. It was because of the difficulty of making a way through the kneeling or standing congregation that a mediæval procession was headed by two vergers with verges or wands to clear its pathway.

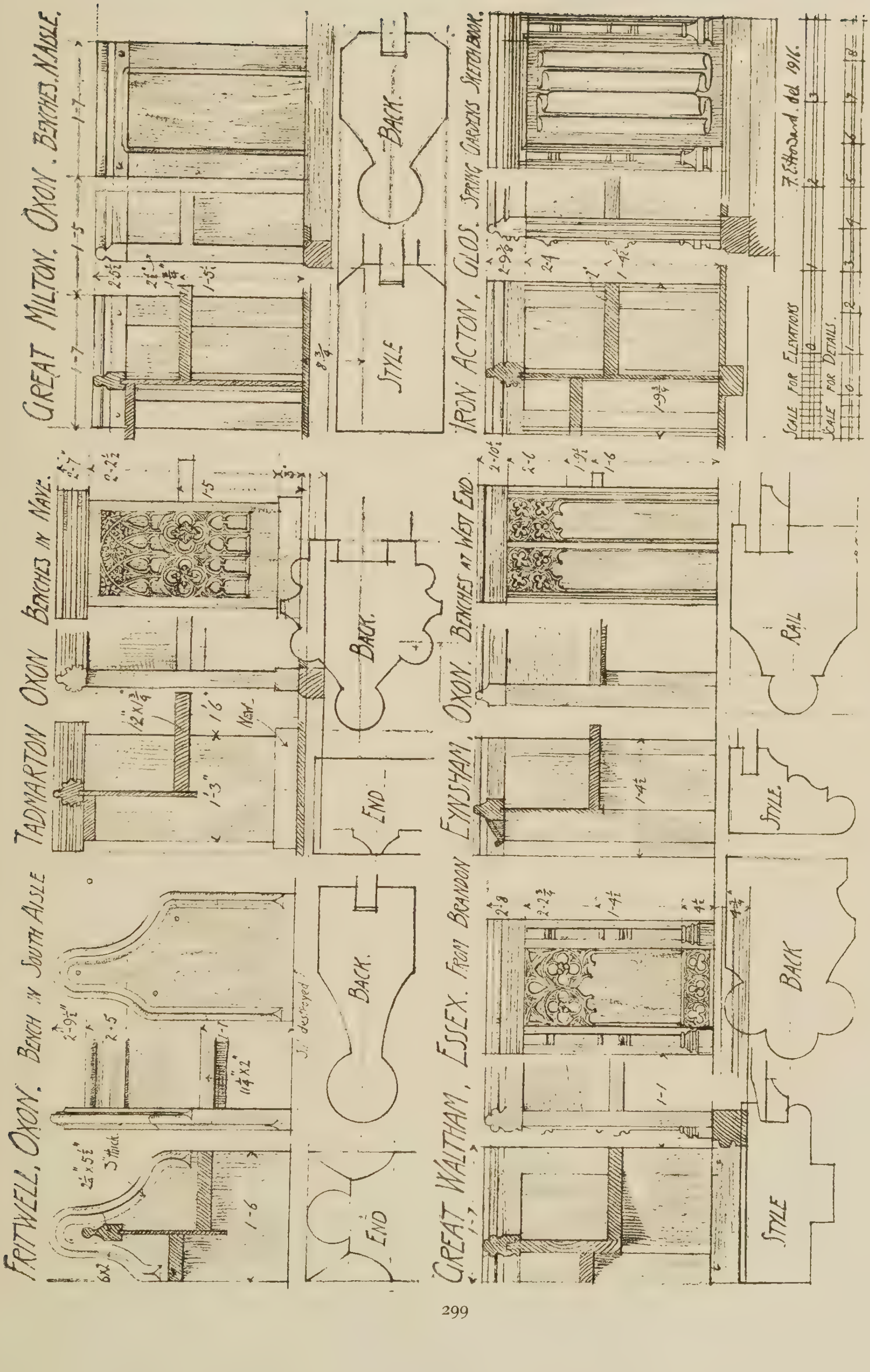
The oldest benches now in existence appear to be work of the thirteenth century. They are extremely solid and rude, and chamfers, as at Cassington (311), or a clumsy shaping, as at Mark (311), are their only ornament. Examples of definite fourteenth-century style are almost unknown, but hundreds of churches retain seating of the fifteenth century. The finest and most elaborate examples appear to have been made in the seventy years preceding the Reformation. There is clear documentary evidence to prove that the practice of the appropriation of pews was in vogue from the first introduction of fixed seating, though it was never approved by ecclesiastical authority. The late benches of the West are often carved with the arms or merchants' marks of their occupants, or with the implements of their trade.

Planning.—The blocks of seating were always so arranged as to leave ample passage ways, particularly at the east end of the nave, where it was often necessary to leave a clear space of 7 to 10 feet to allow room for the side altars against the rood-screen. The western cross passage was also wide, particularly in the greater churches of East Anglia, where the entrances were generally in the western bay of the nave. At Blythburgh, for instance, the whole of the west end was left clear of seating. In most parts of the country, however, the doorways were generally planned in the second bay from the west, and there are blocks of seating west as well as east of the cross passage. In this case the central passage of the nave has often to be widened out around the font, as at Minster Lovell (312) and Idbury, Oxon. When there are no aisles this passage has to be made wide enough for the procession to make its way to the font and to pass itself in returning, as at Strensham, Worcestershire. In the case of an aisled nave there are sometimes three passages running east and west, giving four blocks of seating. Those in the aisle are seldom central. In East Anglia there are often but two blocks, and the wide aisle passages are against the side walls, as at Woolpit.

A raised platform with a wood floor and a stout oak curb was usually formed under the blocks of seating, and the bench-ends were framed into the curb, which served to link each block of seating into a coherent design. The seats and backs were made good to the piers, and continuous panelling, ranging in height with the bench-ends, was often fixed against the side walls, as at Minster Lovell, so the benches are felt to be a part of the church, and not mere loose fittings.

It is curious that there is apparently no evidence for the arrangement of the seats in the transepts of a cruciform church; possibly these were never encumbered with benches.

Construction and Design.—The seats were generally too narrow for modern ideas of comfort. Twelve inches appears to have been considered sufficient. On the other hand, they were very thick; two and a half inches or more is not unusual, though in the Midlands they are seldom more than one and a half inches thick. In the eastern counties the seat was often so low as to be exceedingly uncomfortable, and hundreds have been re-made in the nineteenth century. The devices commonly employed by the restorers were the removal of

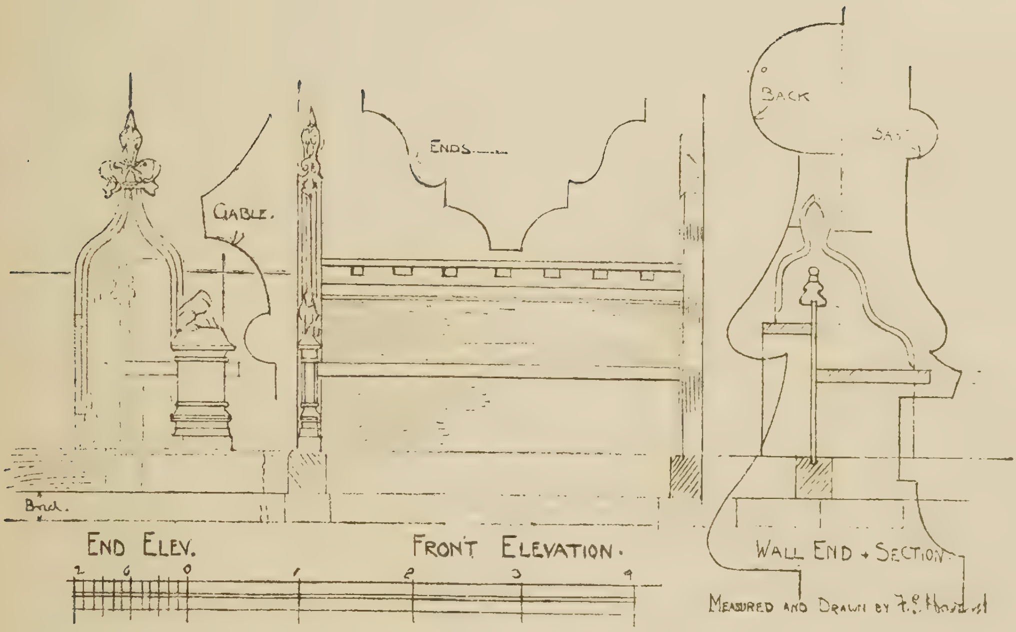

FRITWELL, OXON. BENCH IN SOUTH AISLE
TADMARTON OXON BENCHES IN NAVE.
GREAT MILTON. OXON. BENCHES. N.AISLE.
GREAT WALTHAM, ESSEX. FROM BRANDON
EYNSHAM, OXON. BENCHES AT WEST END.
IRON ACTON, GLOS. SPRING GARDENS SKETCHBOOK.
BACK.
END
STYLE
RAIL
New
3/- destroyed
SCALE FOR ELEVATIONS
SCALE FOR DETAILS.
F.C. Howard. del 1916.

MIDLAND TYPES OF BENCHES

the boarded floor of the platform, leaving the curb, as at East Winch, Norfolk (313), or the mounting of each bench-end upon a plinth, as at Woolpit, Suffolk (314). In the Midlands (41) the benches were not at all badly proportioned for comfort, and they have more often escaped the attentions of the restorers, while in the West (316) it would not be easy to improve upon the dimensions adopted.

A book ledge was generally provided, about five or six inches wide, and of the same thickness as the seat; they are never sloped as in the post-Reformation pews. Sometimes the seat and the ledge are at the same level, but more often the ledge is a little higher than the seat, about two feet above the floor. It is sometimes maintained that these ledges could not have been intended for books, because of the illiteracy of mediæval churchgoers, and a theory has even been propounded that they were intended for kneeling upon, the feet of the worshipper resting on the seat. It is probable, however, that many people had their primers or mass books, for even those who were unable to read, and these were probably fewer in number than is generally believed, would find the illuminations and woodcuts an aid to devotion. The ledge would also be useful for rosaries, crucifixes, and other objects of piety, when they were not being used.

In East Anglia the older seats were often backless, but very few have been allowed to remain in their original condition. The most perfect remaining example is the seating in the north aisle of Cawston, Norfolk. At Blythburgh and Ranworth clumsy backs of hideous design have been added to suit modern ideas of comfort. When backs were provided in this district they were generally uncommonly low, compared with those of other parts of England. At East Winch, Norfolk, there is a stout embattled back rail with a thin panel below, consisting of a single wide board. In the similar example at South Creake, muntins are employed to divide the long panel. The decoration of the seat back by piercing it with tracery is a favourite Norfolk device, well seen at Wiggenhall St Mary (314) and St German. In Suffolk the backs were often cut from a single wide and thick board, moulded and carved with charming running patterns of tracery and foliage, all worked from the solid. The east side of the board



EAST WINCH, NORFOLK

was very reasonably left entirely plain. At Dennington (315) the space below the seat is left open, which is more convenient for cleaning, but at Wiggenhall and Fressingfield (315) it is boarded up. In the eastern district the back seats and front desks of a block differed very little in design from the other seating, except that the boarding below the seat was generally carved, as at Fressingfield. By exception at Cawston, in the north aisle, where the rest of the benches are low and have no backs, the western seat has a very high back to keep off draughts from the doorway.

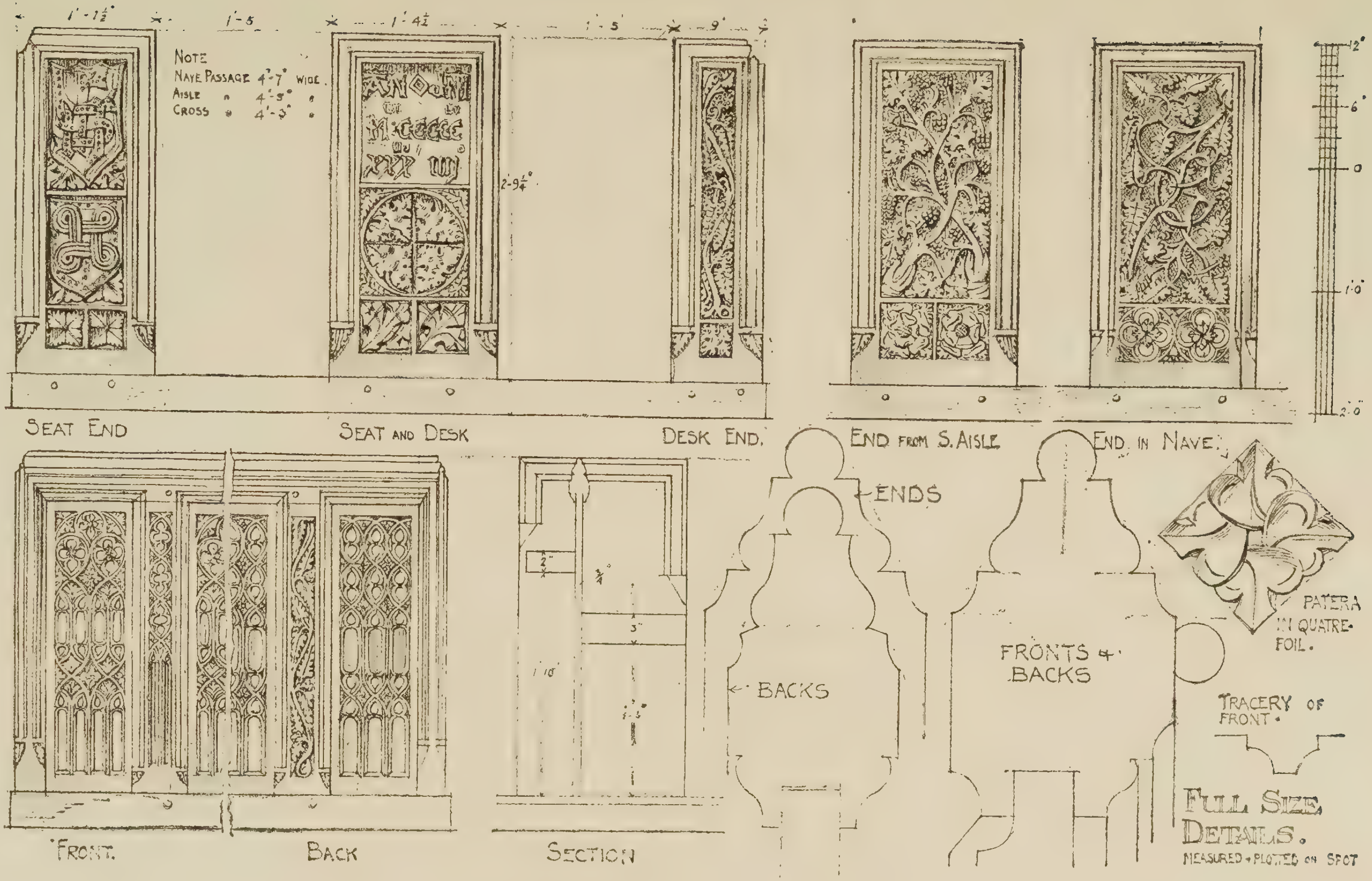
In the Midland counties the backs were generally a little higher, and were composed of a rail with a single thin horizontal panel, grooved into the seat or nailed to its back edge, or of a rail with wide vertical feather-edged boards running down to the floor, as at Iron Acton. The fronts and backs of each range were usually panelled out with moulded muntins; the heads of the panels were often prettily traceried, as at Ashby St Ledgers (311), or carved into linen-fold patterns, while the muntins sometimes had little shaped buttresses applied to them. The bench-backs of the west country resemble those of the Midlands in their general construction. The boarding is almost always vertical, and runs right down to the floor. The fronts and backs, however, were treated rather differently. In Somerset the muntins were often very wide, and were carved with sunk tracery or foliage, as at Crowcombe (303) and Broomfield (317), while the panels were also treated in the same way. In Devon and Cornwall the backs were boarded, not framed up, and were decorated with applied tracery, consisting of a band of tracery at the top, a plinth, and a series of little mullions between, as at Braunton (319).

Bench-Ends.—It is the design of the bench-ends that appears to affect the whole composition more than anything else. There are two distinct types, the rectangular and the shaped. They are of equal antiquity, and were used side by side in the central district, but in East Anglia the shaped type is general, while in the south-west almost all the bench-ends are rectangular.

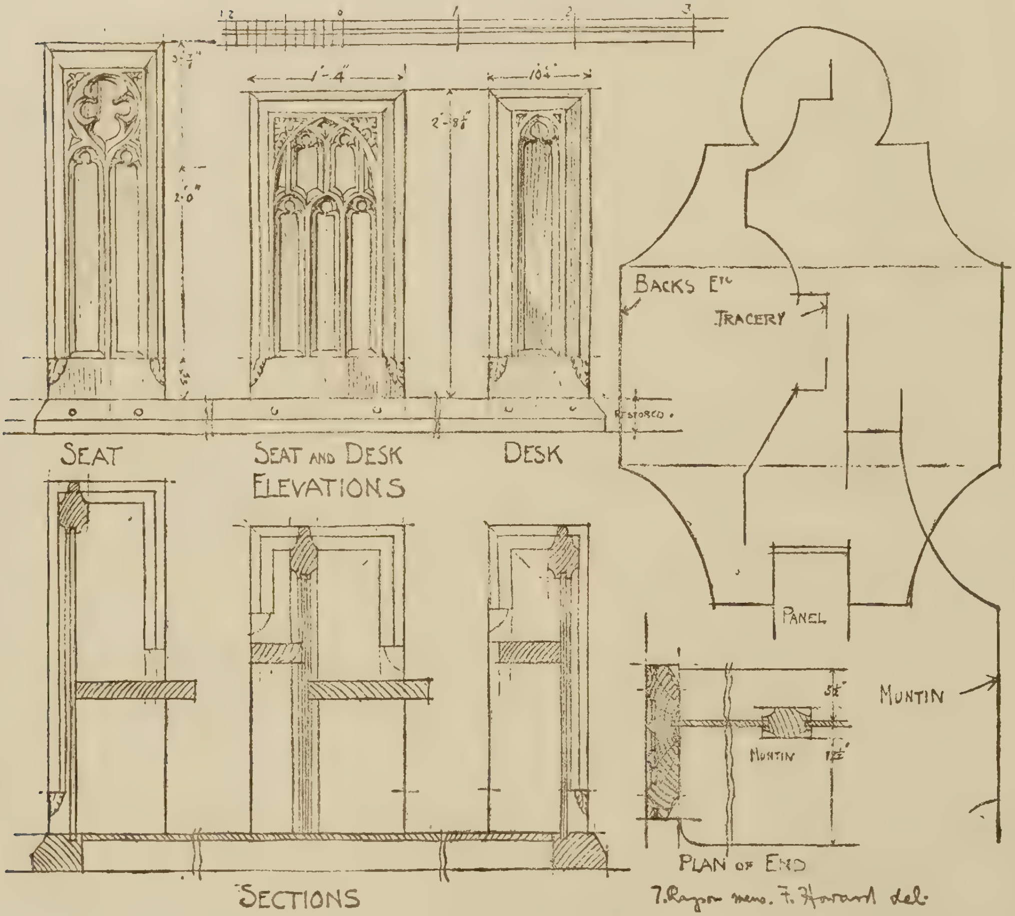
Rectangular Bench-Ends.—The most obvious form of bench-end is a wide rectangular slab, and the simplest attempt at ornament a chamfer or moulding along the top edge, or around the whole bench-end. Such a bench-end is liable to twist as the timber drys, a defect painfully apparent in a long series of ends, some twisting one way and some the other. This was avoided in three ways. In the south-west, where timber was exceptionally plentiful, the bench-ends were made extraordinarily thick. In the Midlands the ends were either tenoned into a stout top rail, as at Tadmarton, or the ends were framed up with styles, rail, and panel. The benches at Cassington (311) are probably among the earliest examples of this treatment, and may be assigned to the late thirteenth century with some confidence.

The solid bench-ends were almost invariably carved, generally with sunk tracery. There are good examples in the North, as at Hemingborough and Stow (312). The carving of the Midland work is rarely elaborate. Tracery of a rigid gridiron type is sometimes found, as at Drayton and Steventon, Berks., but frequently the design is very free and attractive, as at Great Tew and Steeple Aston, Oxon., while symbolic devices, such as the Lily, the Holy Name, and the Aspido.

CROWCOMBE, SOMERSET—BENCHES

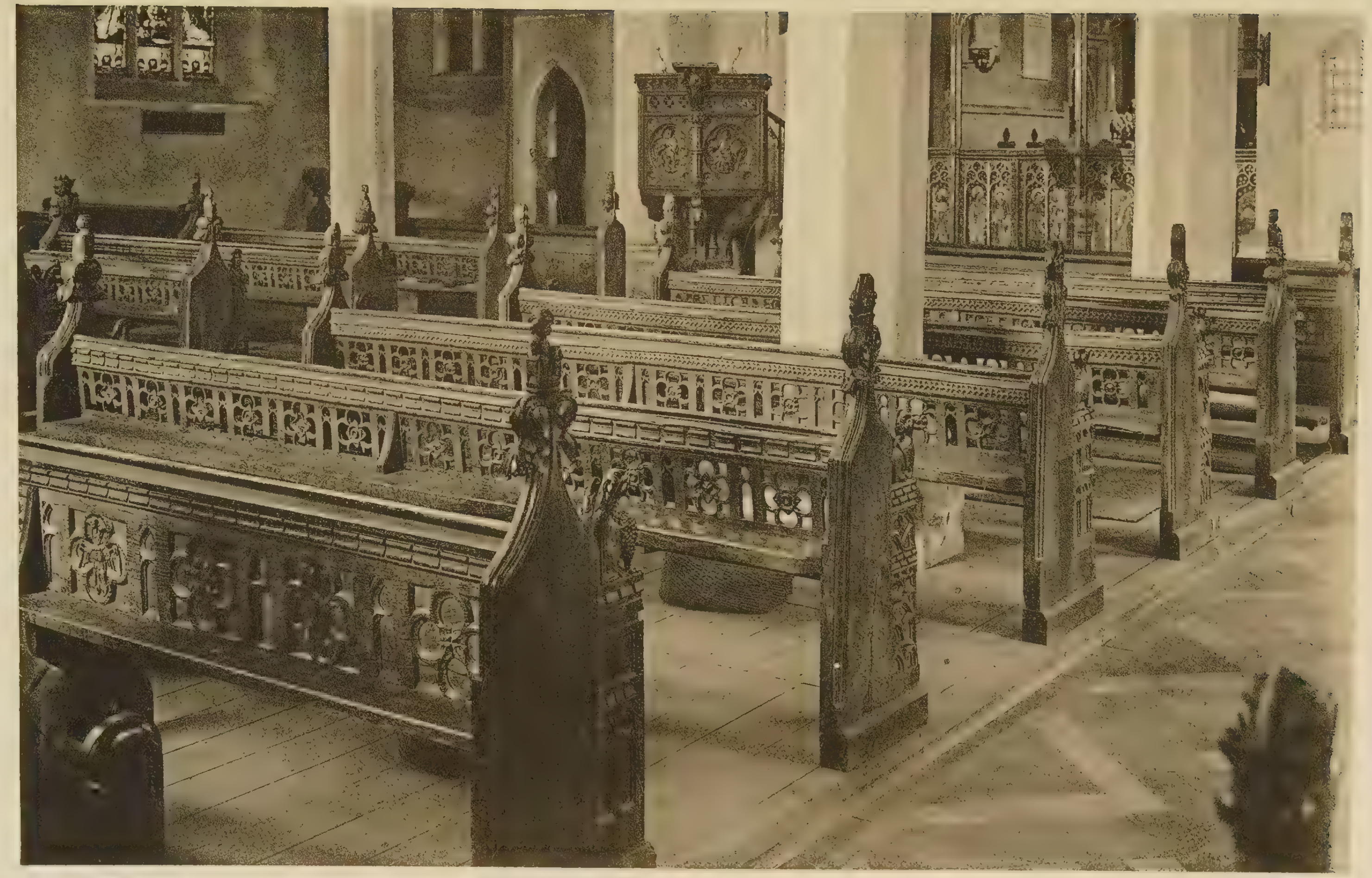


WEST SOMERSET TYPE, CROWCOMBE



LEIGH-ON-MENDIP, SOMERSET

occur at Kidlington, Oxon., and charming little figure panels, representing the Annunciation and donors, are found at Warkworth, Northants (316). Little buttresses are sometimes applied ; at Edlesborough there are three to each bench-end, while at Kidlington there are two, placed diagonally. In Somerset the early fifteenth-century bench-ends are carved with simple but graceful rectilinear tracery, as at Cheddar and Leigh-on-Mendip. A rather later Somerset type shows a square top panel with rectilinear tracery below. In the Quantock district a very fine late type was evolved, in which the entire surface is covered with free foliage carving, chiefly of the vine order, as at



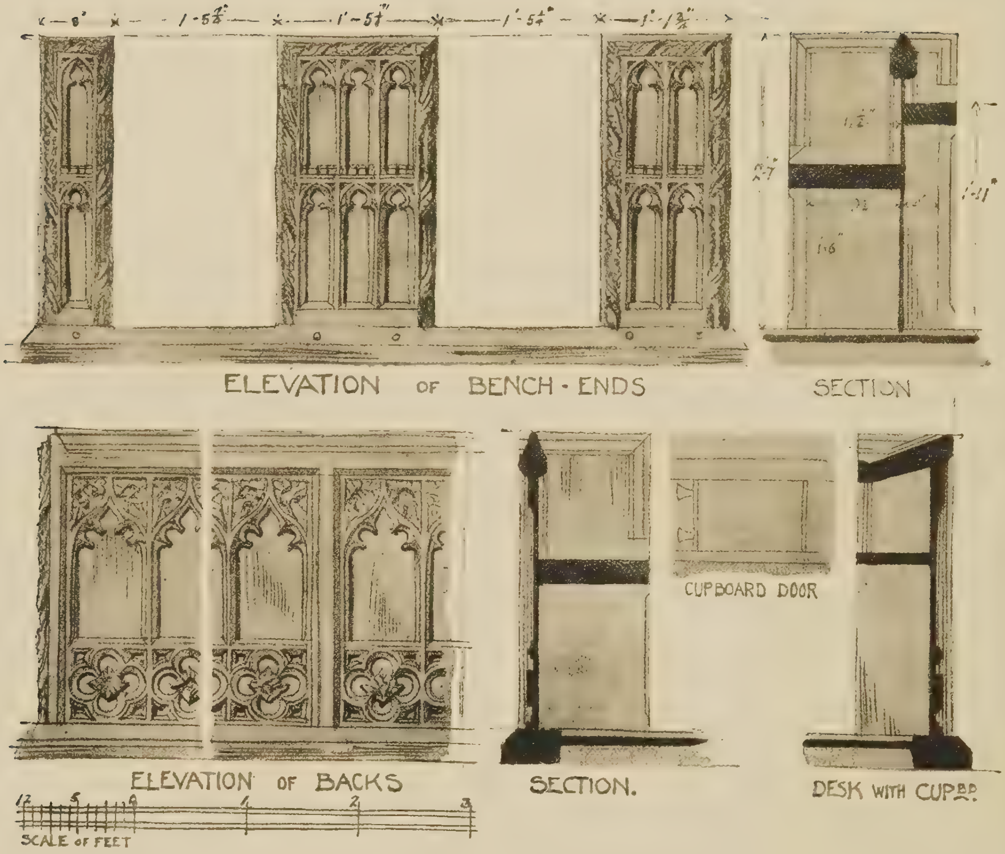
HARPLEY, NORFOLK, 15TH CENTURY BENCHING.

Photo. Rev. Sumner.

Broomfield (317) and at Crowcombe (303), where the variety of design is wonderful. A curious late development of this type is represented by the fine bench-ends of Broomfield, where the foliage is of an uncommon type, neither Gothic nor Renaissance. Tracery of marked flamboyant type is common, as at Milverton (316). In the early sixteenth-century bench-ends of Somerset details of Italian inspiration are very general, especially in the foliage, which in some cases might be the work of alien carvers, and in the curious human heads of classic type which are sometimes introduced, as at Milverton. Another late practice very common in the county is the carving of devices of purely human interest, such as the windmill and ship at Bishop's Lydeard (316), the fuller's tools at Spaxton, the holy water stock and sprinkle at Milverton, the figures composing a procession at Trull, and kneeling donors at Milverton.

In Devon and Cornwall the same course of development may be noticed, but the carving is generally bolder and deeper, and the design is more skilful. A charming feature, peculiar to the extreme south-west, is the trail of foliage around each bench-end. The oldest benches do not possess this feature. For instance, the early fifteenth-century benches at Kenn have a simple moulding, but towards the middle of the century a twisted leaf scroll was commonly employed, as at Ashton, where the arrangement of the benches is completely mediæval. At the end of the century the design of the carved leafage is varied in each bench-end, as at Dunchideock, where there are many charming designs, mostly based upon seaweed. The seaweedy foliage found in Cornwall and north-west Devon is generally very bold and deeply cut. The carving of the actual bench-ends is of various types. In South Devon the favourite form of tracery is severely rectilinear, while that of the north is usually of two lights, with a kind of plinth of quatrefoils and peculiar tracery of almost flamboyant type in the head, as at Lapford (319). Shields are inserted in the panels bearing heraldry, arabesques, or emblems of the Passion, as at Braunton.

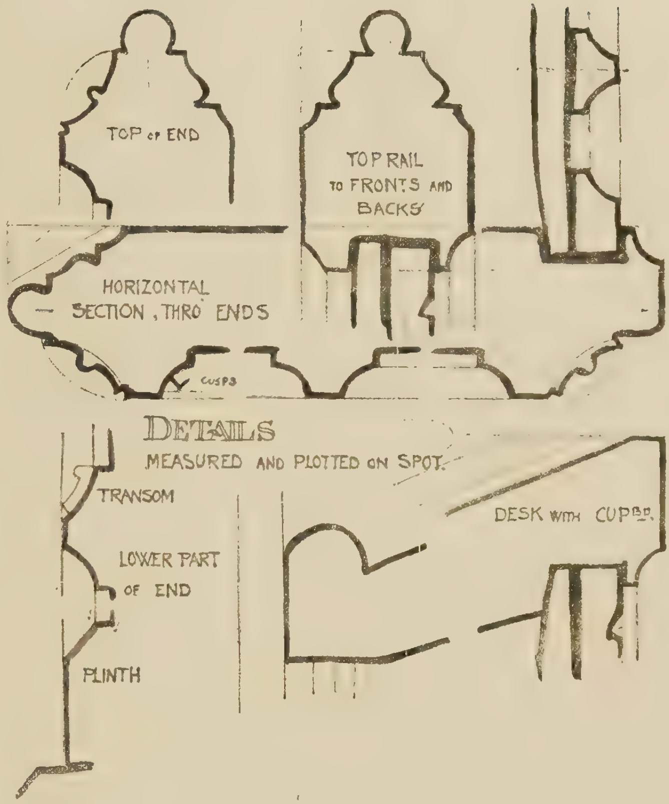
The framed-up ends are peculiar to the Midlands and the adjoining counties. One of the chief sources of ornament are the little buttresses applied to each upright. These are sometimes hewn out of the solid.



ASHTON, DEVON F. E. H.

The effect is remarkably good, and this type even invaded Cambridgeshire and East Anglia. The panels are sometimes left plain, but were often decorated with applied tracery heads, particularly in Gloucester, Worcester, and Northants. Byfield (41) and Ashby St Ledgers (41) are good examples. Sometimes the panel was subdivided by a central muntin, and the tracery was duplicated, as at Eynsham (299). The use of the linen panel was not infrequent in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century, as at North Crawley (311) and at Hillesden, Bucks., where each bench-end has two panels of excellent design.

Shaped Bench-Ends.—The earliest attempt at shaping was probably made to disguise the bad effect of the twisting and warping to


TOP of END
TOP RAIL to FRONTS and BACKS
HORIZONTAL SECTION, THRO' ENDS
CUSPS
DETAILS
MEASURED AND PLOTTED ON SPOT.
TRANSOM
LOWER PART OF END
PLINTH
DESK WITH CUPBD.

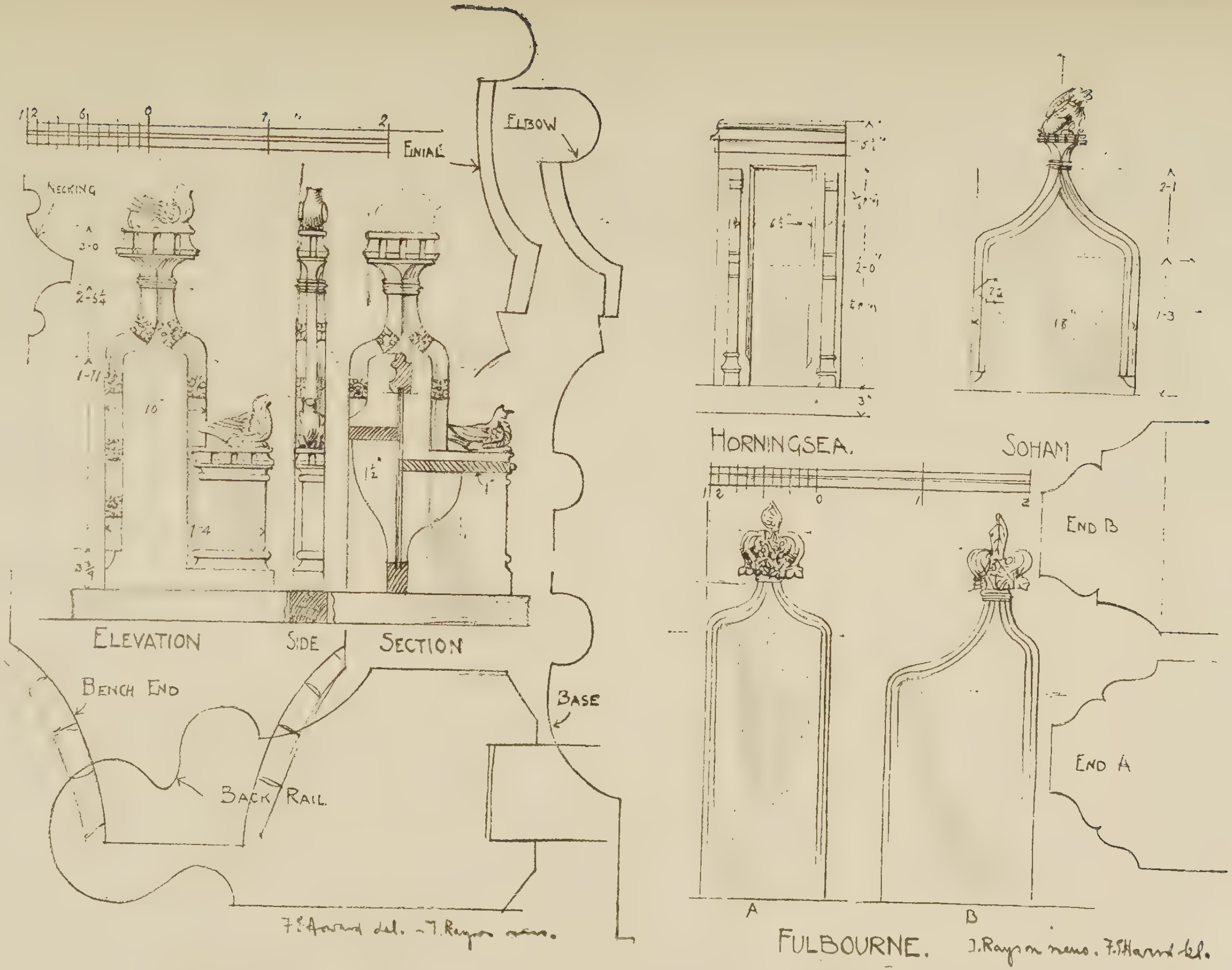
ASHTON, DEVON F. E. H.

which the solid ends are so subject. The thirteenth-century ends at Dunsfold, Surrey, are good examples, in which the general rectangular shape is retained, but the top edge is shaped into a hollow curve between two scrolls. At Kilmersdon, Somerset (313), there are some benches of another early type in which almost all the bench-end above the seat is cut away, exposing the end of the seat back, but leaving a sort of shaped elbow. Mark (311), in the same county, has a few benches of a very early type, in which the genesis of the poppy head may be seen. The elbows sweep up to a circular knob. The next step was to mask the junction between the shaping and the knob with a moulded necking, and to carve the circular knob into a rose, which soon developed into a leaf, as at Cotes-by-Stow (312), a finial of fleur-de-lys outline, as at Great Brington (41), or a bunch of grotesque heads, as at Lowick (41). In some of the late poppy heads heraldry and figure work are freely introduced.

There is an important factor in the design which is frequently overlooked. The seat is necessarily wider than the desk, so the back panelling does not come in the centre of the bench-end, and as a result the shaped end is rarely symmetrical. At Wellow, Somerset (318), and

Atherington, Devon (319), are examples of the use of shaped ends in the west country; no devices are employed to mask this irregularity, and the effect is not altogether pleasant. In the Lowick (41) benches the difficulty is avoided by not commencing the shaping until the level of the top of the back is passed, and the benches are unduly tall. The most ingenious and satisfactory solutions are to be found in the benches of the eastern counties. In the district around the Wash a type of bench-end is commonly found in which the upper part is planned to come central with the back, while the lower part is widened out to stop the seat in a sweeping elbow, which was sometimes twisted up into a knob, as at Cotes-by-Stow (313). In Norfolk a grotesque or heraldic beast sliding down the elbow is a common ornament, giving a charming effect. Another device was also employed with magnificent results. The bench-end and its finial was planned to suit the back as before, and a kind of buttress was applied to the eastern side to take the end of the seat. The buttress was provided with a coping and plinth, and a delightful beast sat upon each. The type is very common in East Anglia, and also occurs in Cambridge, as at Swaffham Bulbeck (309), where particularly attractive beasts decorate the finials as well as the elbows. In the magnificent bench-ends of the Wiggenhalls (314), where the ends are heightened, as at Lowick, buttresses are applied to both sides of the bench-ends, the rigid symmetry is not nearly so pleasing as the unsymmetrical design of Woolpit (314) or Dennington (315). These shaped ends were often carved, particularly towards the end of the fifteenth century, and the design tended to become more and more intricate. Fressingfield, Woolpit (314), and Dennington are among the best examples, showing great fertility of invention, and introducing symbols and heraldry. The most elaborate treatment of all is seen at Wiggenhall St Mary, where a niche, containing the well-carved figure of a saint, adorns each bench-end, a treatment which also occurs in the rectangular bench-ends of Combe-in-Teignhead, Devon.

The destruction of benches in the last few centuries has been almost as grievous as that of the screens. They fell victim, not to religious fanaticism. but to the dictates of fashion. Towards the end of the seventeenth century enclosed pews with high backs gradually

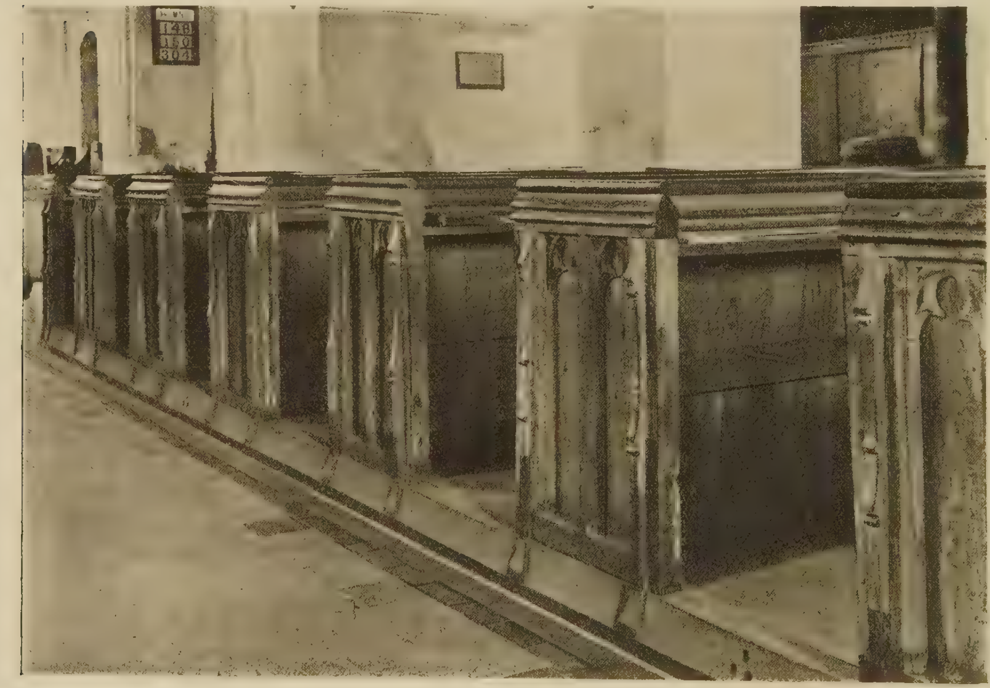


SWAFFHAM BULBECK

CAMBRIDGESHIRE BENCH-ENDS

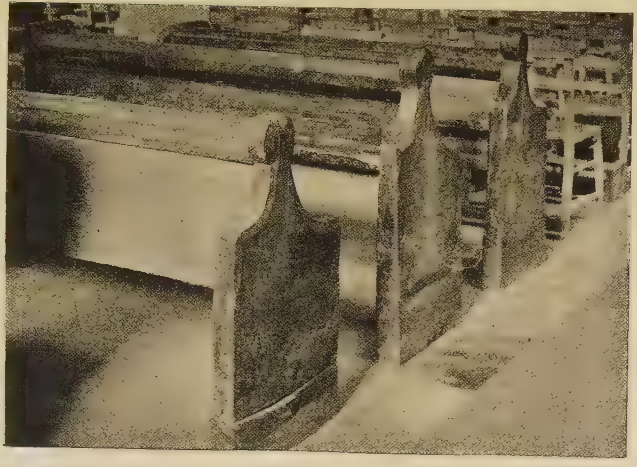
ousted the low mediæval benches. They tended to become higher and higher. It was not unusual for the new panelling to be fixed to the original benches, enclosing and hiding them. This has often preserved them from destruction. During the last century the treatment meted out to the mediæval seating has often been disgraceful. Very often only the bench-ends have been retained, the seats and backs having been entirely renewed, not faithfully, with wide boards in the panels, but with the "V-jointed match-boarding in narrow widths," beloved by the restoring architects. These new backs with their confusing lines effectually ruin the effect of the old work.

It is amusing to note how, when an almost complete clearance of the old benches has been made, the few survivors have been relegated to the rear for the use of the poorer parishioners, while the aristocracy of the village use the new and hideous seats, or naked chairs, which have taken their place.

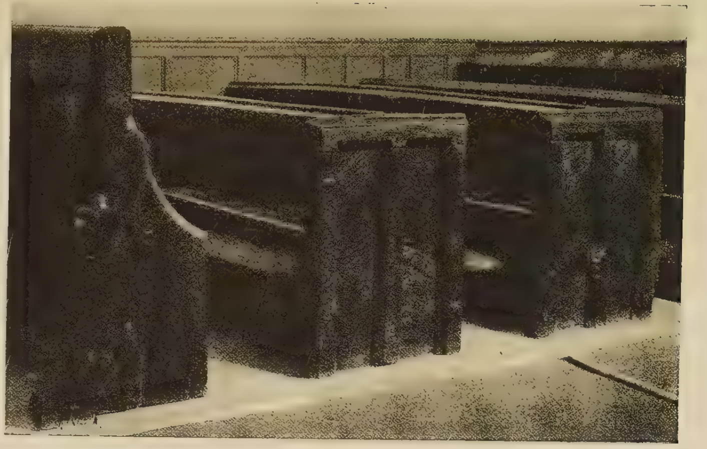


CLYMPING, SUSSEX, BENCHES

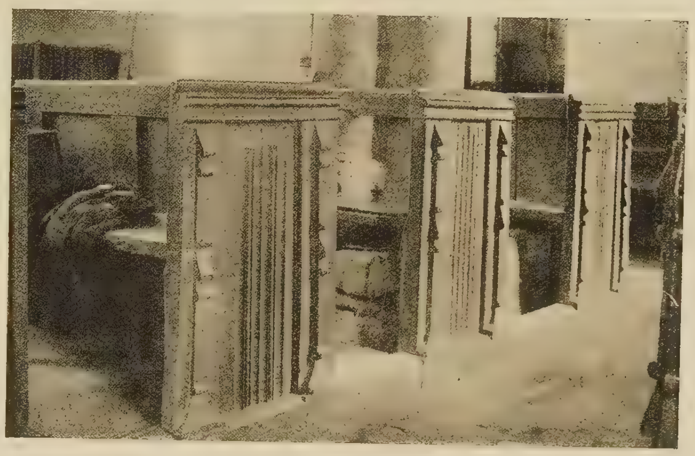
THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BENCH—MIDLAND TYPE



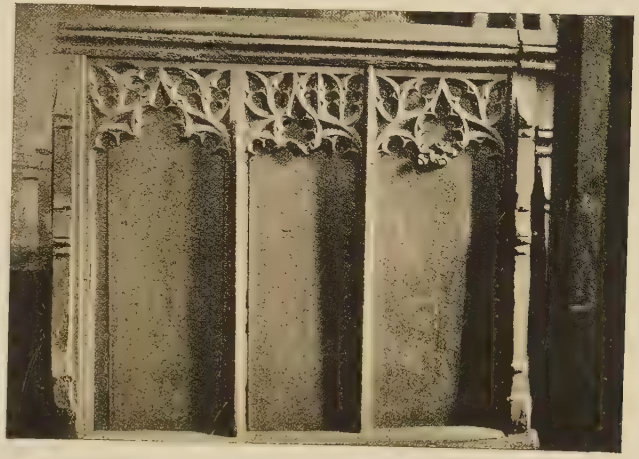
MARK, SOMERSET, LATE THIRTEENTH CENTURY



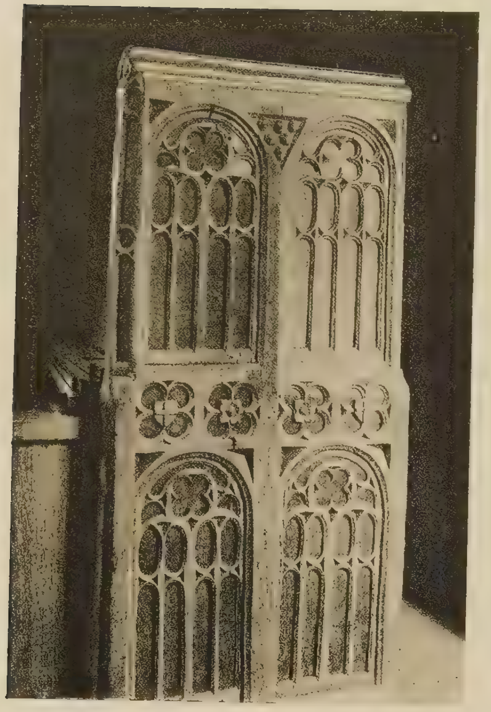
CASSINGTON, OXON, *c.* 1300



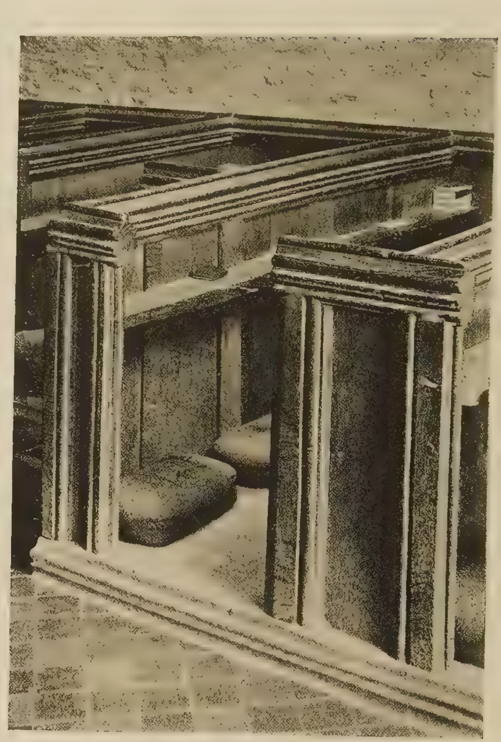
NORTH CRAWLEY, BUCKS.,
LATE FIFTEENTH CENTURY



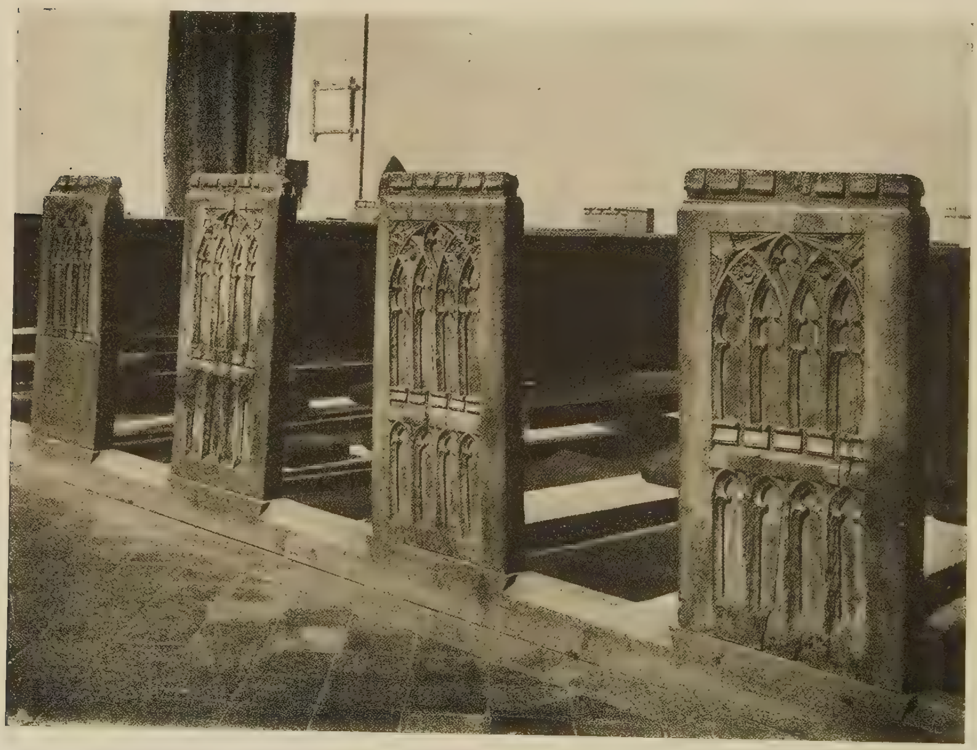
ASHBY ST LEDGERS, NORTHANTS,
MID-FIFTEENTH CENTURY



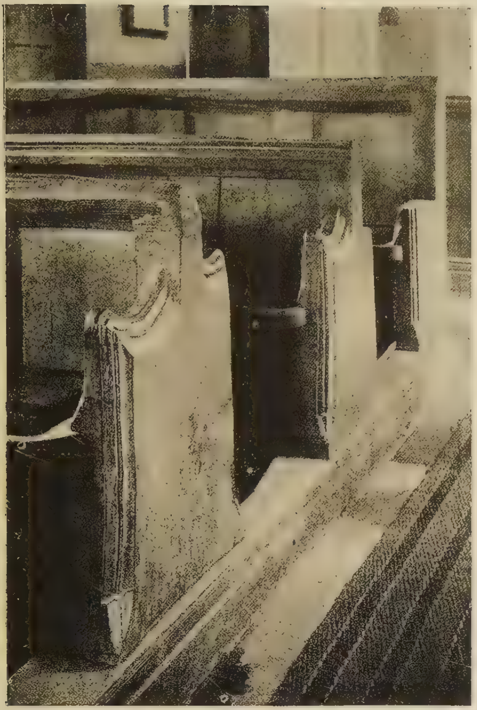
HEMINGBOROUGH, YORKS., SOLID



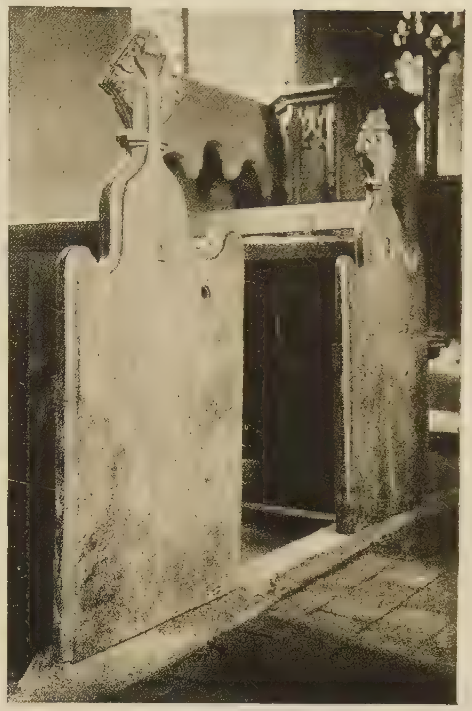
MINSTER LOVELL, OXON, FRAMED UP



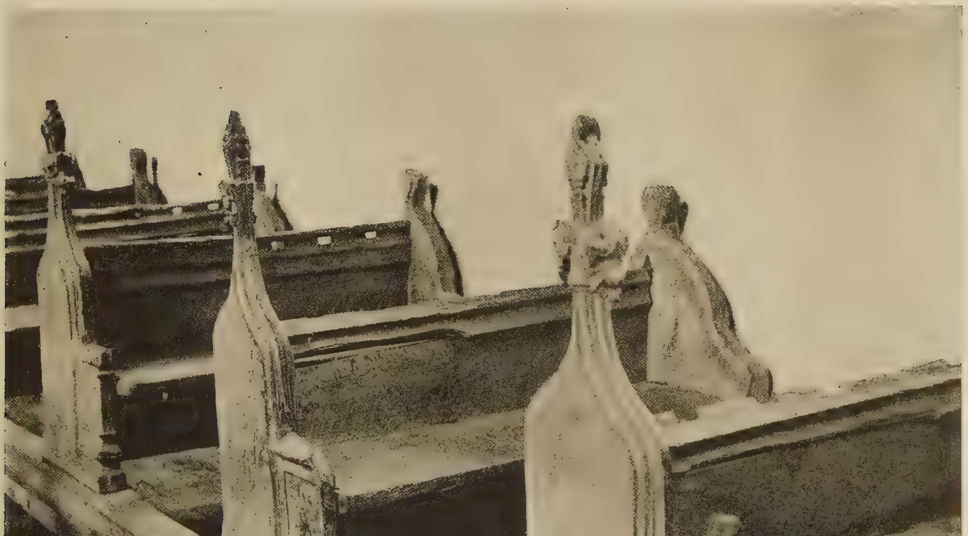
STOW, LINCS., CARVED IN SOLID



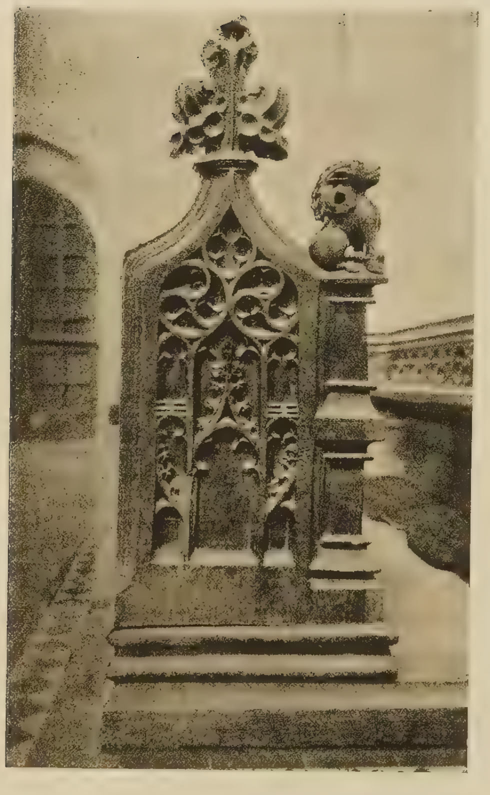
KILMERSDEN, SOMERSET,
EXCEPTIONAL



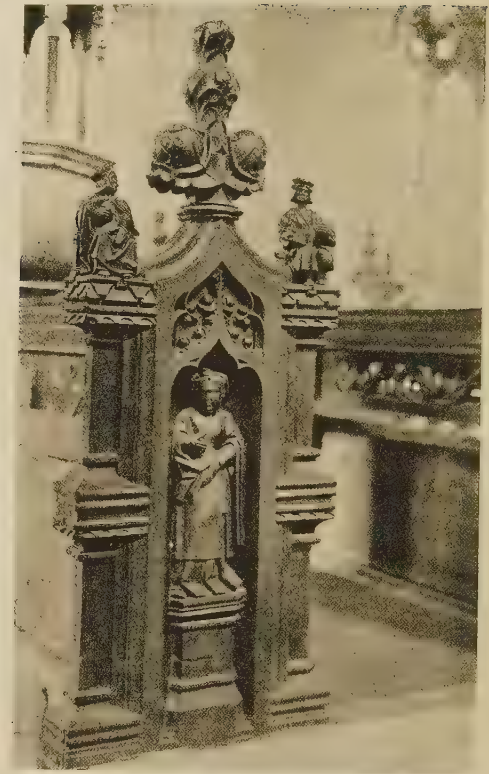
COTES-BY-STOW, LINCS.,
SHAPED ELBOW, "WASH" TYPE



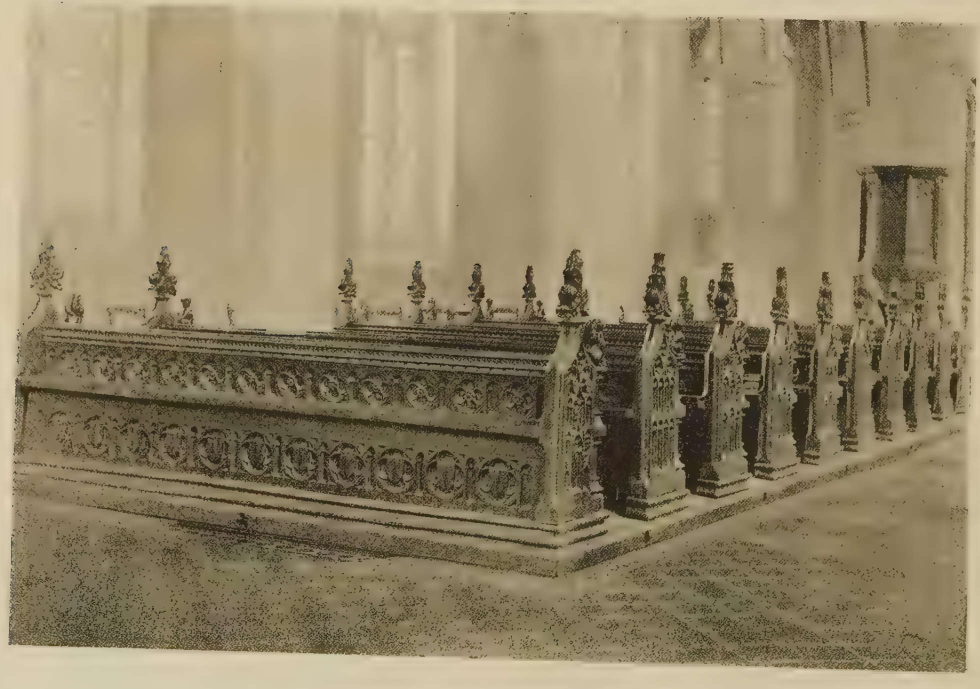
EAST WINCH. NORFOLK TYPE, BUTTRESS ELBOW



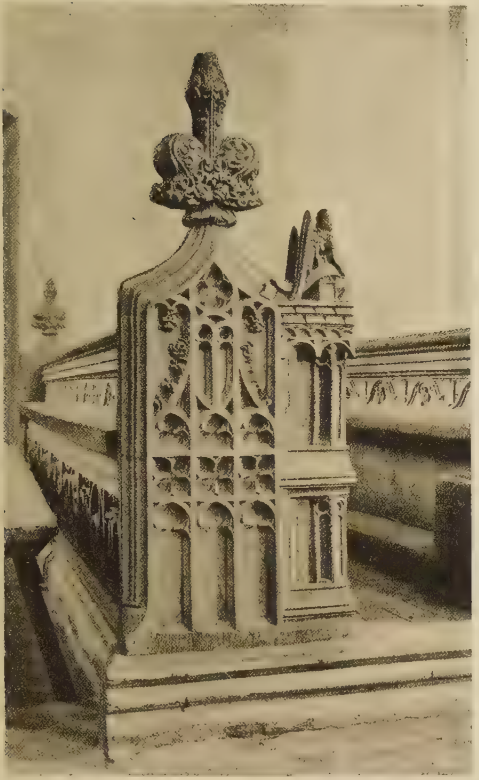
WOOLPIT, SUFFOLK



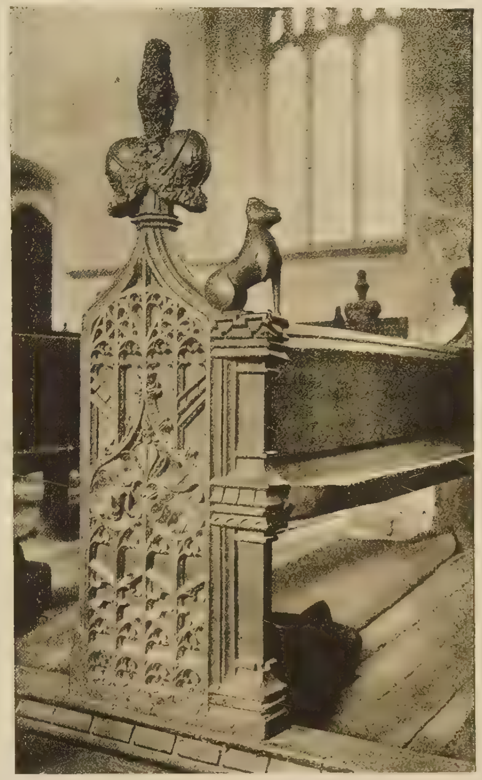
WIGGENHALL ST MARY V., NORFOLK



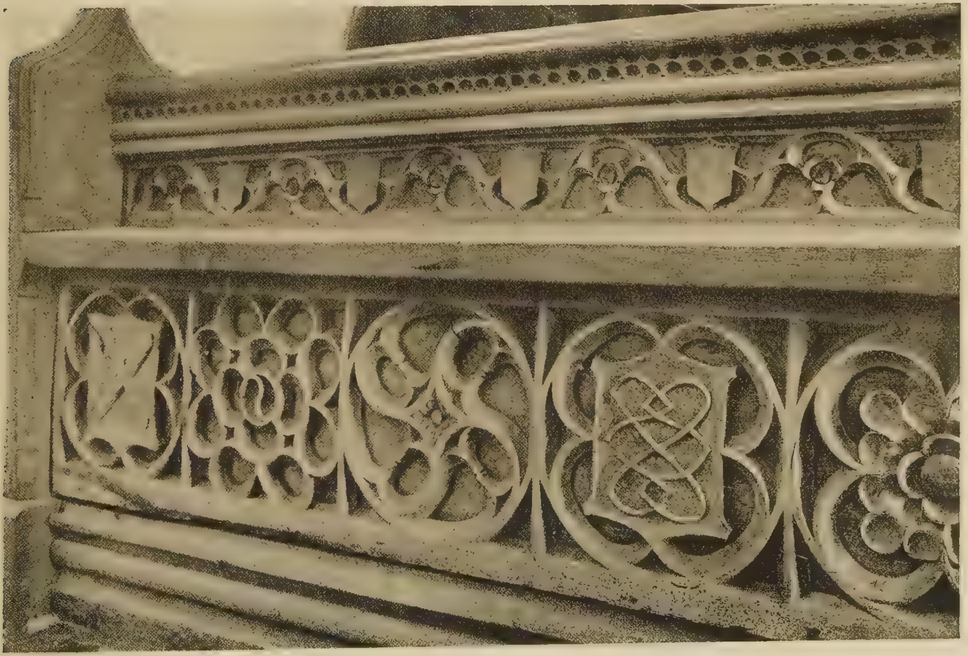
WOOLPIT, SUFFOLK, BENCH-BACKS



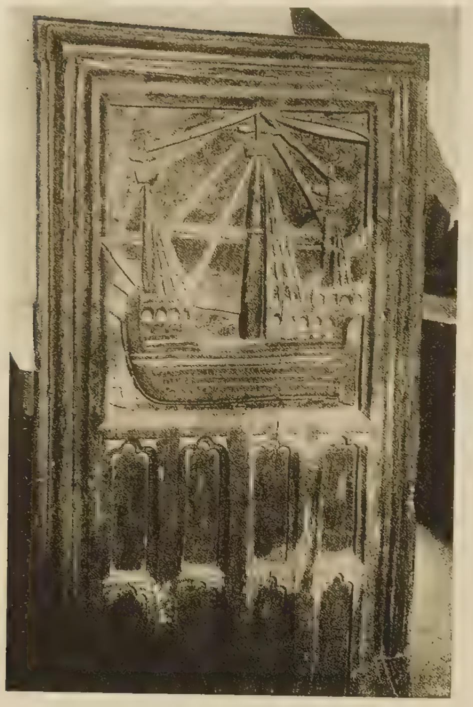
FRESSINGFIELD, SUFFOLK



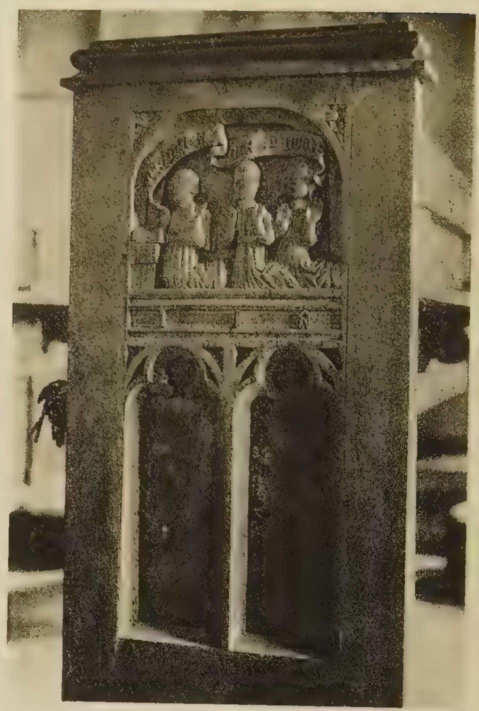
DENNINGTON, SUFFOLK



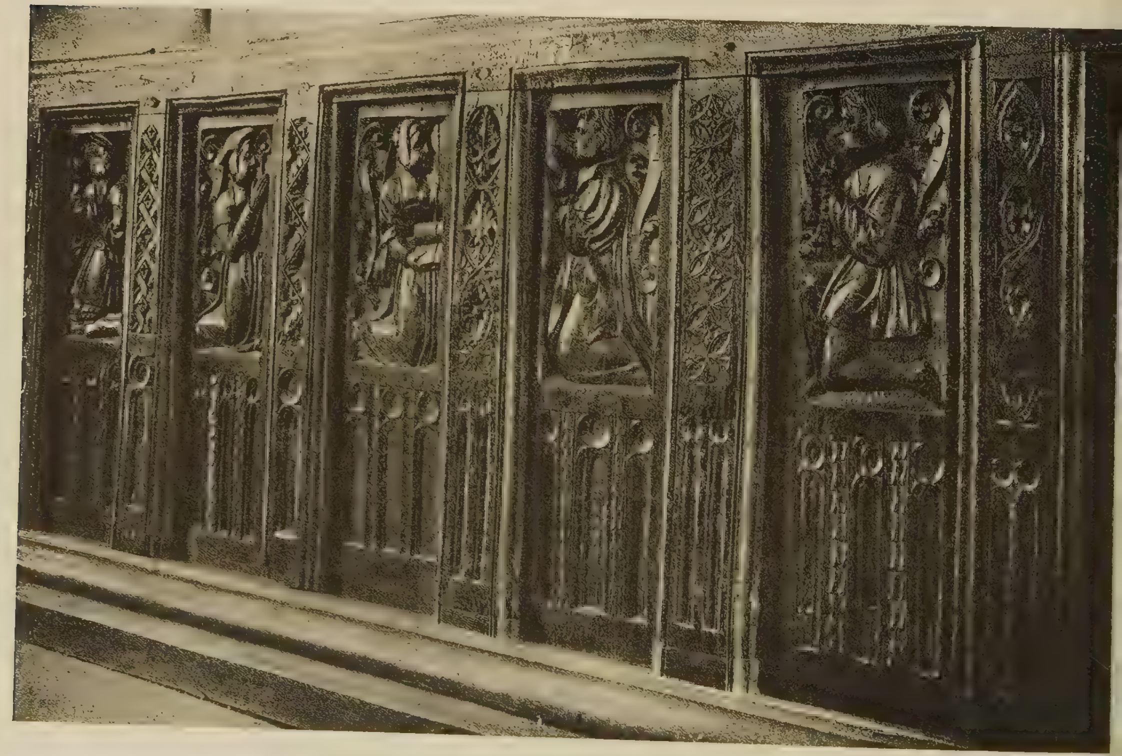
FRESSINGFIELD, SUFFOLK, BENCH-BACKS



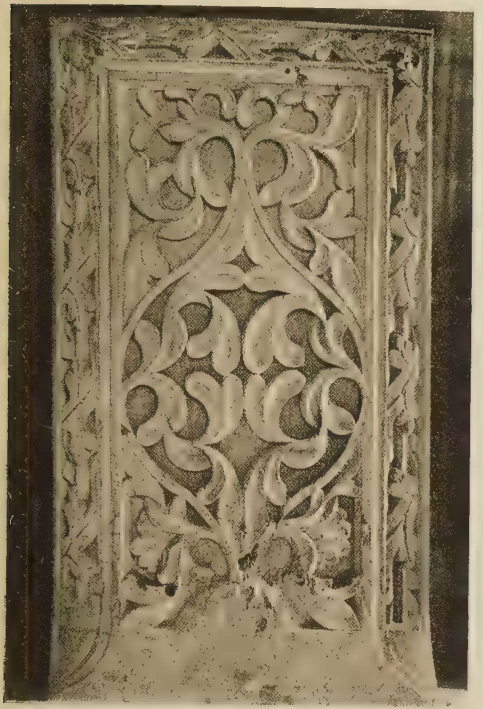
BISHOP'S LYDEARD, SOMERSET, SHIP



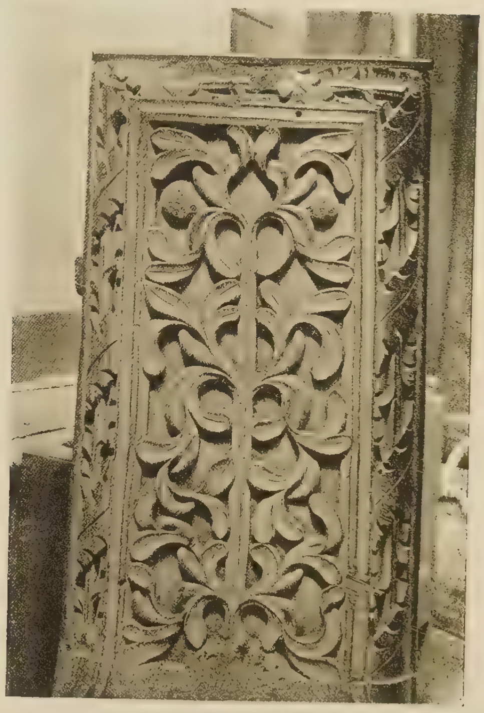
WARKWORTH, NORTHANTS, DONORS



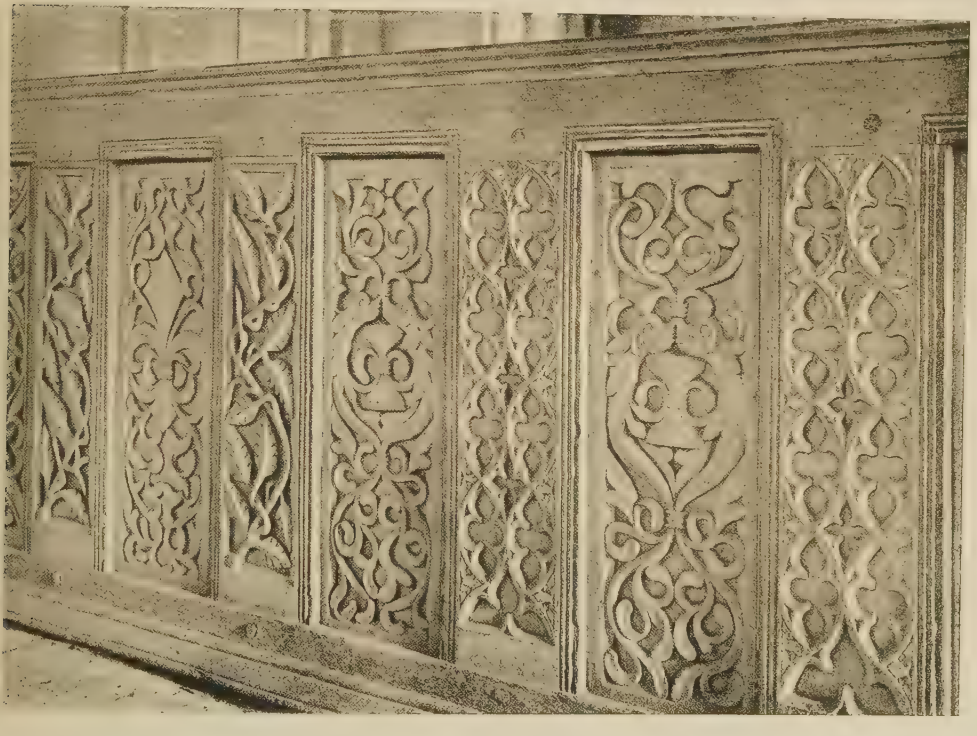
MILVERTON, SOMERSET, BENCH-BACK WITH KNEELING DONORS



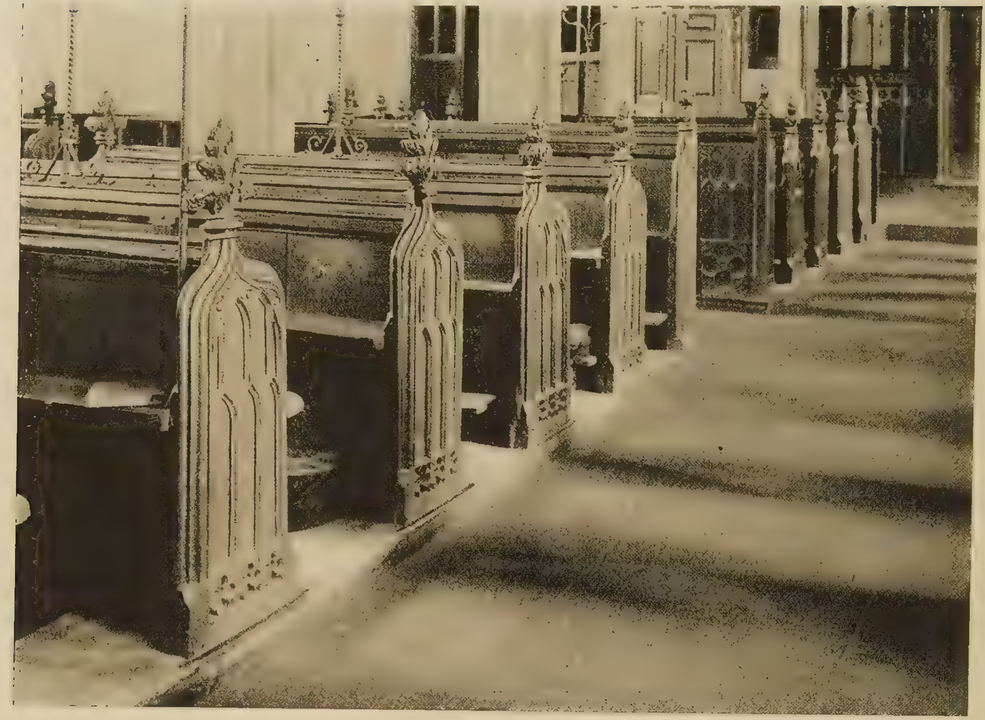
BROOMFIELD, SOMERSET, BENCH-END



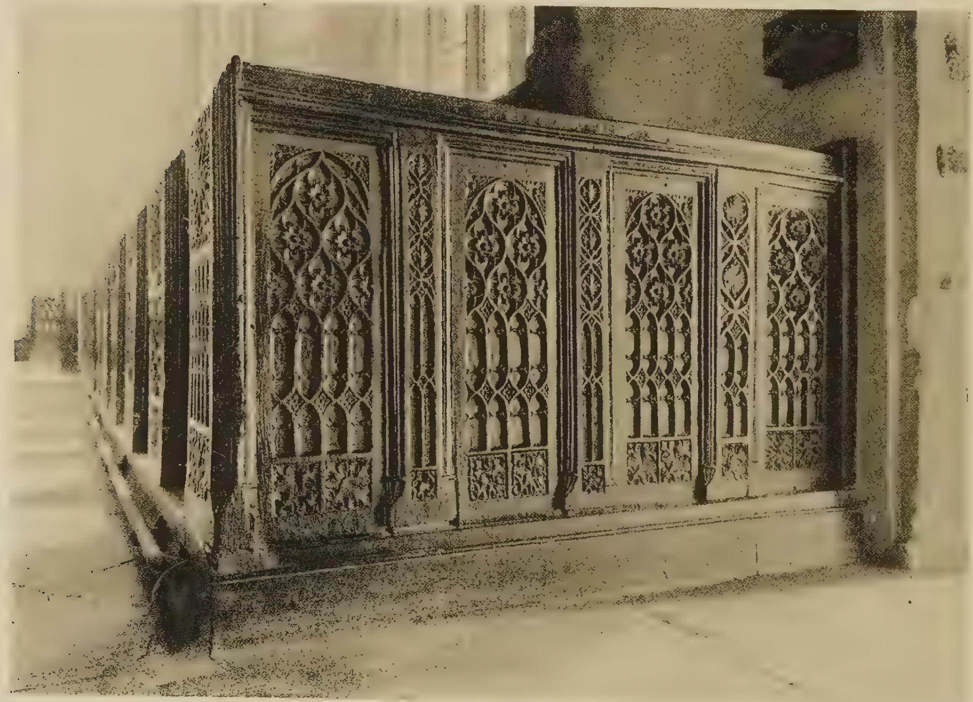
BROOMFIELD, SOMERSET, BENCH-END



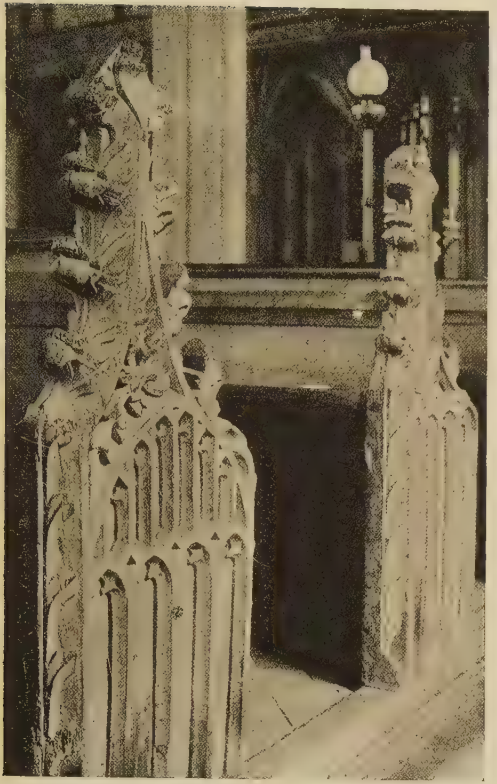
BROOMFIELD, SOMERSET, BENCH-BACK



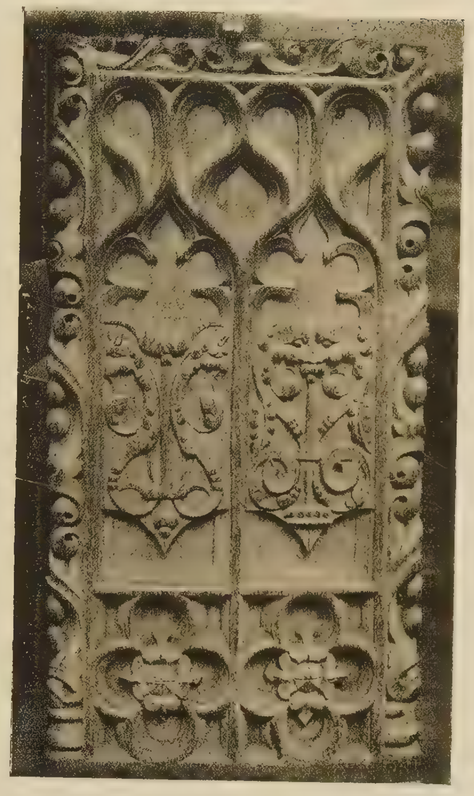
WELLOW, SOMERSET, SHAPED ENDS, EXCEPTIONAL



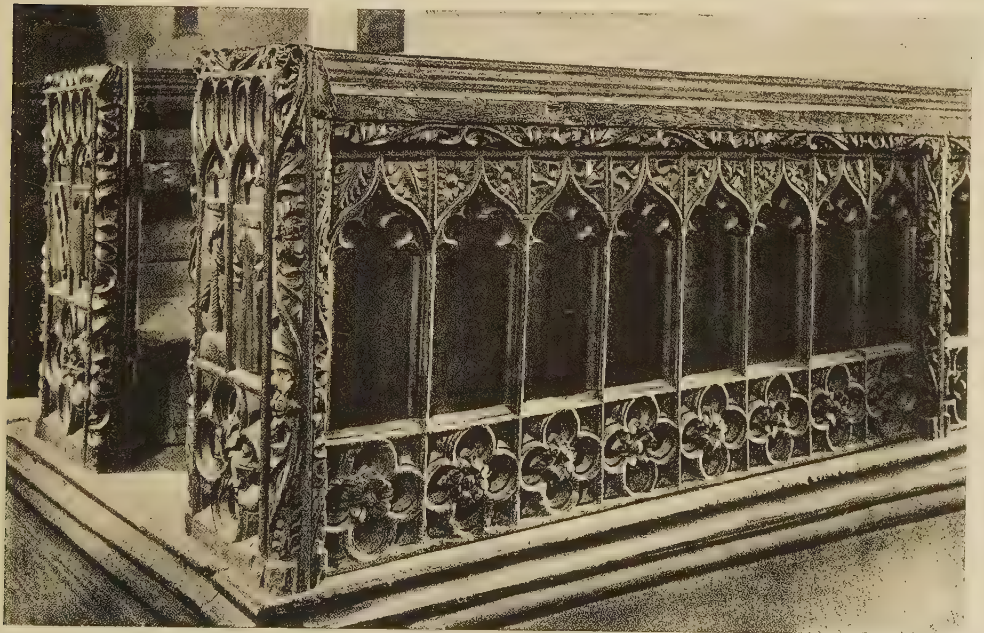
CROWCOMBE, SOMERSET, NORMAL WEST SOMERSET STYLE, DATED 1534



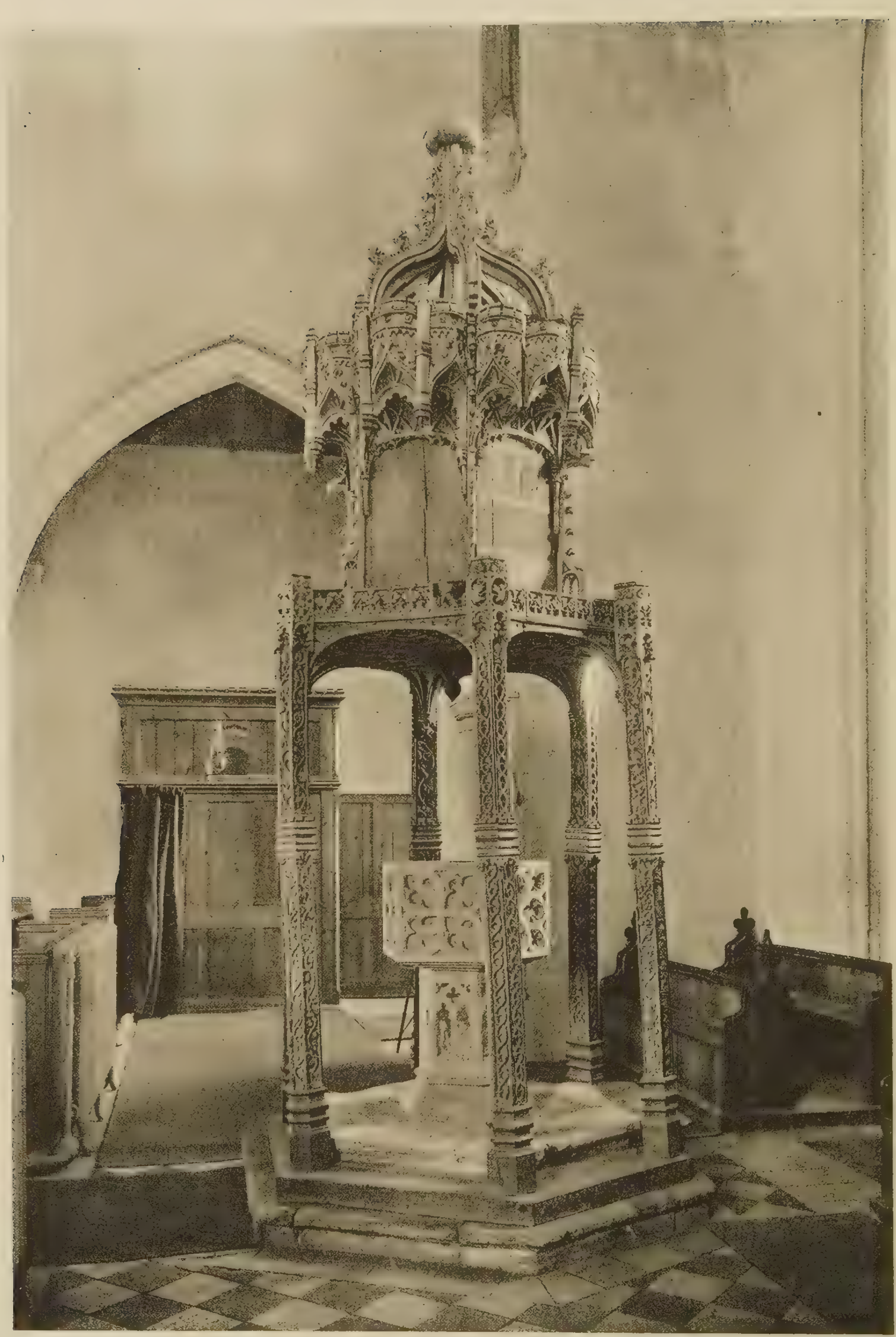
ATHERINGTON, DEVON, EXCEPTIONAL



LAPFORD, DEVON, RENAISSANCE



BRAUNTON, DEVON, NORMAL WEST DEVON STYLE



TRUNCH, NORFOLK, EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY

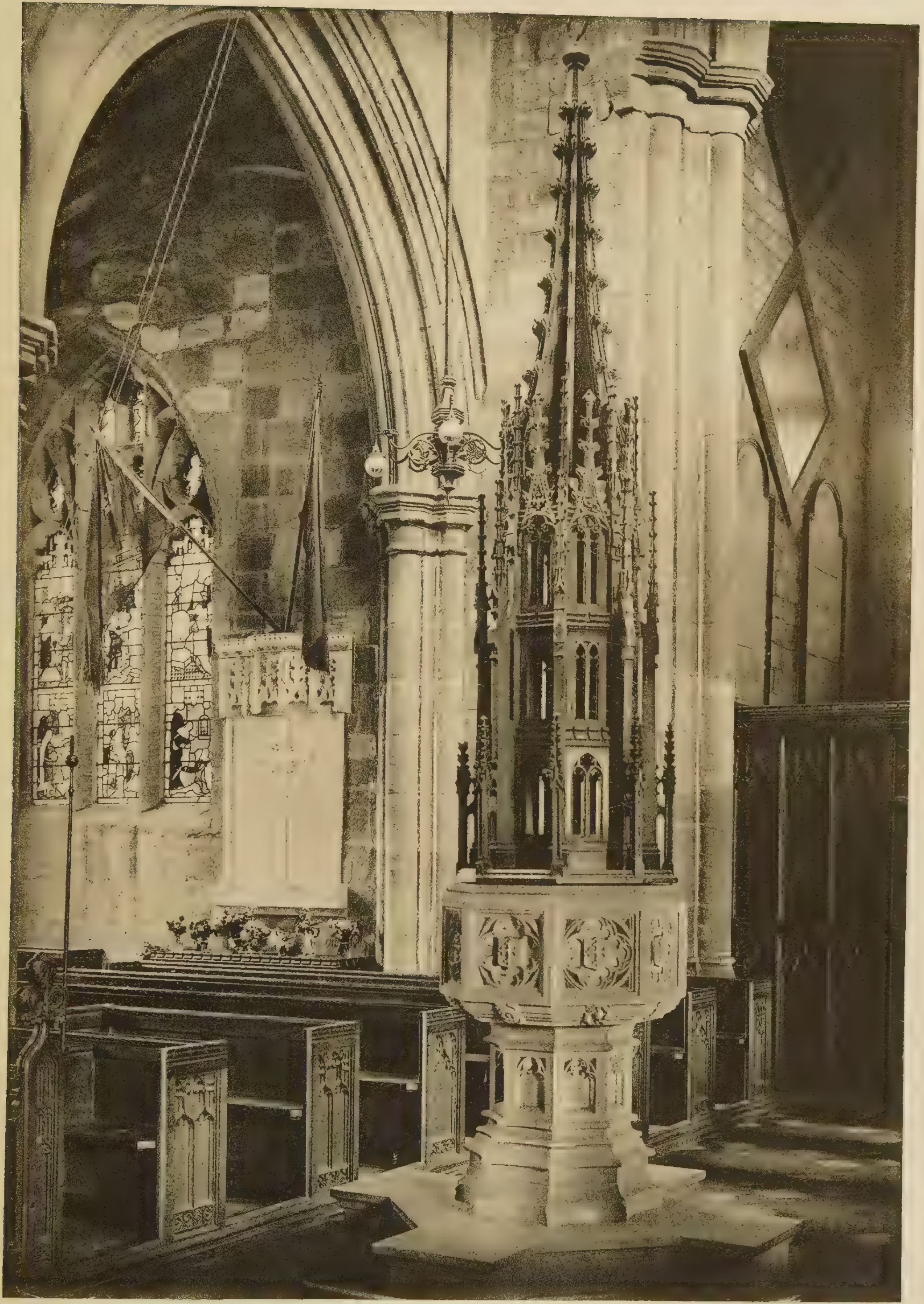
FONT-COVERS

It was the custom in mediæval England to consecrate the baptismal water at certain seasons only, of which Easter Eve was the chief. Consequently it was necessary to keep the font covered and locked up. Nowadays, when the water is renewed at each baptism, the necessity for this is not so great, but the use of the locked font-cover is decent and reasonable, and saves the font from much irreverent treatment.

The flat lid is the simplest possible form of font-cover, but there does not appear to be any existing mediæval example. A short spire is an early type, which has continued to be used down to the present day. At Charlton-on-Otmoor, Oxon., the circular tub of the thirteenth century has a plain conical cover, terminating in a rudely carved crown, which may be contemporary with the font. Certainly it bears no resemblance to anything of a later date. There is a font-cover at Ashby St Ledgers, dating from the fifteenth century, in the form of a pyramid, with moulded ribs strengthening the angles, and at Monksilver, Somerset (330), is a similar cover with crocketted angle ribs. At Frindsbury, Kent, the triangular side panels are traceried; at Pilton, Devon, they are carved with foliage; while at St Mary's Steps, Exeter, they are carved and pierced. The last example, though Gothic in conception, is probably post-Reformation. The hollow-sided pyramid is a graceful variety, occurring at Pinchbeck, Lincs. (330). Another type is the ogee dome, identical in construction but producing a very different effect. Rycote, Oxon. (330), has a cover of this description with moulded angle ribs and plain panels. Old Cleeve, Somerset, is similar, but has traceried panels of varied design.

The next step in the elaboration of the font-cover appears to have been the raising of the pyramid or dome upon a drum; this may be merely a deep-moulded plinth, as at Aldenham, Herts., or each side of the drum may be panelled and traceried, as at Asbocking, Suffolk (331), or carved, as at Pilton, Devon (338). A further development is found in a series of covers, mostly of late date, and scattered over the eastern and southern counties. In this group the drum is so lofty that it is possible to open the sides like the wings of a triptych when access to the font is desired, instead of lifting the cover bodily, as at Swymbridge, Devon (338). There is a font-cover of this class at Sedlescombe, Sussex, with linen-panelled sides and pyramid spire; the design of this example reminds one of the domestic furniture of its date, the early years of the sixteenth century. Ticehurst, in the same county, shows foreign influence in the design of its flamboyant tracery which decorates the interior of the cover; such a treatment of the interior is, of course, a necessity in this type of font-cover, for the inside is as much in evidence as the outside. Bramford, Suffolk, has a lovely triptych cover with niches decorating the sides of its drum, and an ogee dome with crocketted angle ribs; and at Shaugh Prior, Devon, is another in two stories, terminating in a spire like that of St Mary's Steps, Exeter.

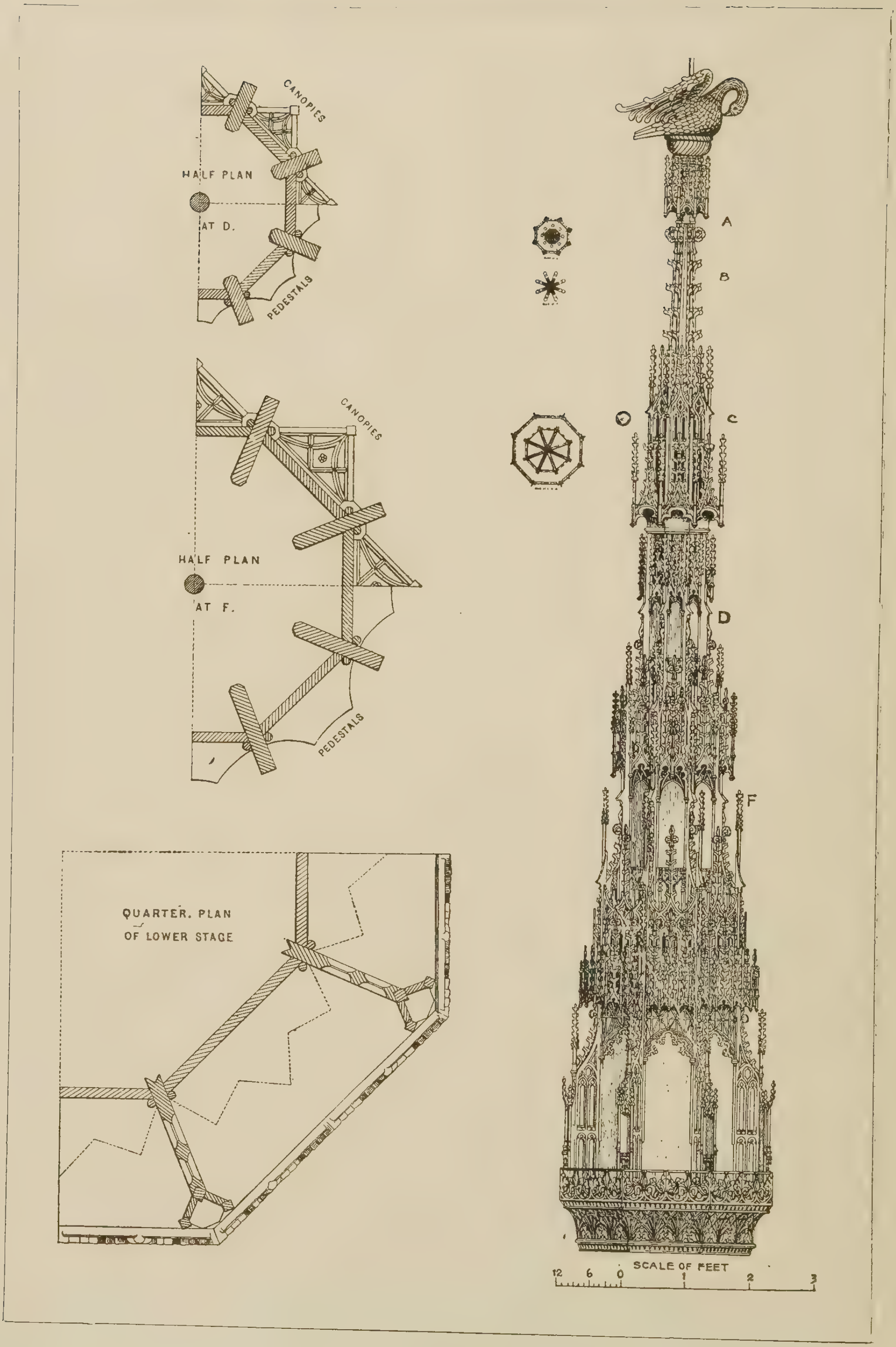
Side by side with these types of font-cover we find the tabernacled variety, in which solid panels are discarded in favour of pierced tracery and nichework, and the simple straight or curved angle ribs are replaced by elaborate pierced, crocketted, and pinnacled buttresses, radiating from a central post. Frostenden, Suffolk (331), has a cover intermediate between these two classes, with a drum of much smaller diameter than the font, standing on a base-board which fits the font accurately. The drum is linked up to the base by angle buttresses, and the spire is unusually lofty. The Finningham font-cover (332) is about the simplest of the tabernacled class, consisting of a base-board round which a moulding with a cresting runs, supporting eight radiating standards, cut out of thin boards, designed after the manner of flying buttresses, crocketted along the upper edge, and pierced with tracery. These are fixed to a central post, terminating in a moulded and embattled capital, and their outer edges are fashioned into pinnacles, standing at each angle of the font. Between these pinnacles are fixed



THIRSK, YORKS, LATE 15TH CENTURY FONT COVER.

other pierced and traceried boards, gabled and crocketted, forming a species of drum. Barking, Suffolk (332), is almost identical in construction, but there is no central post, and the radiating standards do not meet in the centre; they support a spire built up like the pyramid covers with eight curved and crocketted ribs, into which as many plain curved panels are grooved. The base-board too has a charming little parapet, minute niches are formed on the front edges of the buttresses, and the windows in the sides of the drum have ogee hood-moulds with crockets. The Elsing (46) font-cover, once erroneously ascribed to the fourteenth century, has the panels of its drum treated in a rather different manner. They are left rather solid, and serve as the background to little niches, formed by planting on small bases and canopies. The latter, as in many other cases, are triangular on plan, and are built up, a triangular block, carved on the underside into the semblance of a vault, forming the core, to which two archlets and a pinnacle are fixed. In this case the canopies are a restoration, but there is ample precedent for such an arrangement. The charming little font-cover at Copdock, Suffolk (331), is a two-storied version of Barking, with two traceried drums, the upper of much smaller diameter than the lower. Frieston, Lincs. (334), of exceptionally beautiful outline, is also of two stages; the lower has a niche with open back and triangular canopy on each side, while the upper has windows with ogee canopies. It is possible that in this case there were eight small images of saints in the niches, but at Newcastle (334) there are three font-covers of very similar type, though of late date, in which this was certainly not the case, for the canopies project beyond the base-board, leaving no room for them to stand upon.

These tabernacled covers were suspended and were raised and lowered by means of winches or balance weights, but the finest examples are almost invariably of the telescopic construction. In mediæval font-cover design there was a tendency to make the cover a canopy rather than a lid. In the telescopic type of cover the upper portion is suspended as a permanent canopy over the font, and the lower part, which acts as the lid, is hung to it by a system of ropes, pulleys, and balance weights, so that it can be raised and pushed



UFFORD, SUFFOLK, TELESCOPIC FONT-COVER

J. K. Calling, *Del.*

up over the upper section. A splendid six-sided telescopic cover of the first half of the fifteenth century exists at Castleacre, Norfolk (329). The lower stage is open and has a beautiful vault. It has been suggested that a figure of Our Lady once stood beneath this vault, but this can never have been the case, for when the cover is raised the base-board is close under the little ceiling. Ufford (46, 324) has the finest font-cover in England, octagonal on plan, adorned with a wealth of nichework. The rich vaulting and cresting of the base, forming a cornice to the font, the forked standards with minute niches in the angular recesses, and the corbelled-out top stage are striking features of this wonderful triumph of mediæval art. At Worlingworth (336), not far away, there is another cover of similar design, though the workmanship is not nearly so good. As in many other instances the ingenious telescopic device has failed, and the cover has been altered into the triptych form. A similar fate has overtaken the once magnificent telescopic covers of Hepworth, Suffolk (336), and Terrington St Clement, Norfolk (336). The North Walsham cover, an exceptionally fine piece of work, has lost its lower stage, and that of the Brancaster font is permanently telescoped. The last example is perhaps the most modest specimen of a telescopic cover. The detail, compared with that of Ufford, is extremely sketchy, but the general effect remarkably good.

At Trunch (320) and St Peter Mancroft, Norwich, a grand development of the telescopic font-cover is found. The upper stage is much enlarged, and stands on legs upon the floor instead of being suspended from the roof. The lower stage, forming the actual lid, originally telescoped up into the canopy. It is unfortunate that in both cases this portion has been destroyed, but at Norwich it has been well restored, and there is no doubt as to the general arrangement of the device.

The St Peter Mancroft cover is apparently the earlier of the two. It is octagonal on plan, and stands on four legs. The drum, with an elaborate niche in each side and an ogee dome, is a restoration, but the legs and the flat canopy on which it stands are genuine work of typical late fifteenth-century East Anglian making. Each leg is composed of four small circular shafts with niches and crocketted tracery between, terminating in an ornate arched and battlemented pedestal, now supporting an angel of modern date. The edge of the flat canopy is decorated with exquisite foliated arches and a beautiful cresting, and the soffit is elaborately vaulted.

Trunch is practically unrestored, and retains traces of colour. Hexagonal on plan, it stands on six legs, beaded at the angles and decorated with delightful trails of seaweedy foliage, vine leaves, and bare twigs. The arches and cresting forming the curb of the canopy are not so satisfactory in design as those of the Norwich cover. The arches are uncusped and follow a broken line on plan, for they are pinched out to meet the legs, and have foliaged spandrels, while the cresting is of the pomegranate type. The drum retains fragments of finely carved radiating buttress standards, and is decorated with niches. The main vault of these niches is nearly a semicircle on plan, and there are three secondary vaults, also semicircular, adhering to each. The canopy fronts, worked in the solid, are quaintly battlemented. The dome is composed of six radiating ogee ribs gorgeously crocketted, crowned by a very inadequate post-Reformation ball.

Mediæval font-covers were generally suspended from a beam in the roof, but in some cases a special font beam is found. At Sheringham, Norfolk, where the font-cover has disappeared, the font is placed centrally, and the beam spans the nave some feet above it. At North Walsham, Norfolk, it stands under the west arch of the south arcade, and the beam runs from pier to pier. Sall, Norfolk, has retained a lovely font crane, fixed to the front of the tower gallery and projecting eastwards over the font. The arched rib forming the gib of this crane is finely cusped, and the spandrel is delightfully traceried. At Merton, Norfolk, where the font is not placed on the centre line of the roof, a similar but plainer crane projects from the south wall of the nave.

These font cranes were sometimes glorified into gorgeous testers, as at Pilton, Devon (338), where the wall piece of the crane becomes rich cinquecento panelling, and the arched jib a beautiful coving, while the horizontal beam develops into a tester. The font cover is suspended from this canopy, and is a pyramid standing on a drum with pinnacles at the angles, crocketted ribs, and charmingly foliaged panels. Several recent writers have relegated this fine cover to the post-Reformation period, deceived by the ugly scrollwork which disfigures the top, but this is plainly a later addition, the rest of the cover dating from the early years of the sixteenth century.

At Swymbridge, Devon (338), the tester, which does not act as a crane, is certainly earlier than the cinquecento back panelling, and the font-cover is of the triptych type, with the font completely enclosed with panelling. Here again Jacobean alterations, to the top of the cover in this case, have given the composition a post-Reformation aspect, but, save for the Italian detail of the panel carving, the design is still mediæval in conception, though it is certainly later than Pilton.

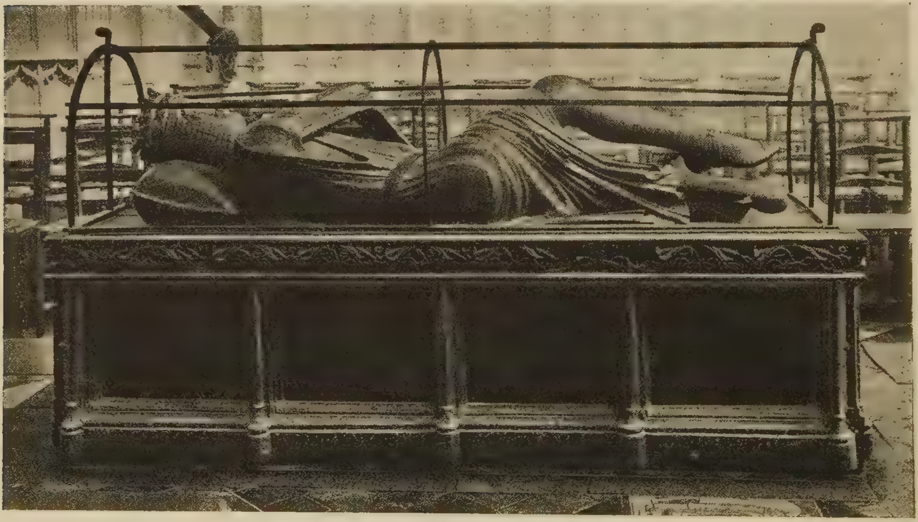
An interesting detail of the design of font-covers is the finial which crowns the composition. The simplest is a moulded capital, as at Finningham, the most usual a bunch of crockets. Sometimes a pelican upon its nest, feeding its young with the blood from its breast, is used as a finial. That of the Ufford (46, 324) cover is a splendid composition, and there is another at North Walsham which is even better. There is a dove at Castleacre (329), possibly of post-Reformation date. An angel forms the finial at Colebrook and Ewelme (333).

Of like character are the bosses which occasionally decorate the vaulted lower stages. The font-cover at St Nicholas, Newcastle (337), has a particularly beautiful example, representing the Coronation of Our Lady, surrounded with an aureole of rays with a border of the usual mediæval cloud ornament.

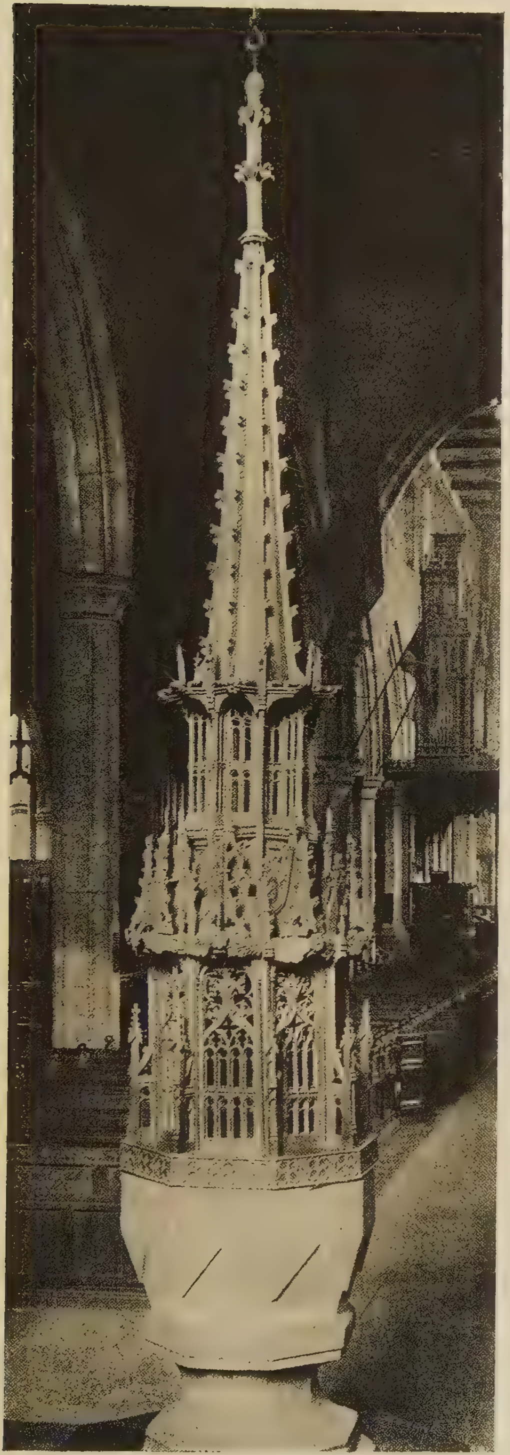
There is something especially fascinating about pre-Reformation font-covers; they are so varied in form, and so full of fancy, the details so delicate and quaintly pretentious. Every feature of a large church, buttresses, pinnacles, windows, turrets, parapets, and spires, are to be found on a minute scale. At Hepworth (337) the carver has even peopled the little turrets which form the bases of the niches with tiny figures of men opening and shutting the doors.

Unfortunately very little of this beautiful work remains, in comparison with the extraordinary wealth of screenwork. East Anglia affords the finest and most numerous group. Yorkshire can also show a local group, not so finely wrought but of great merit, as at Well (335), Almondbury (335), and Halifax (335). The font-covers of the eastern half of England are mostly of the tabernacled variety, while in the West the types with solid panels are more numerous. Devon has a few striking font-covers; those of Somerset are more modest; while the Midland counties have only three or four examples apiece. Triptych covers are a feature of the counties around London, but it cannot be said that they are numerous.

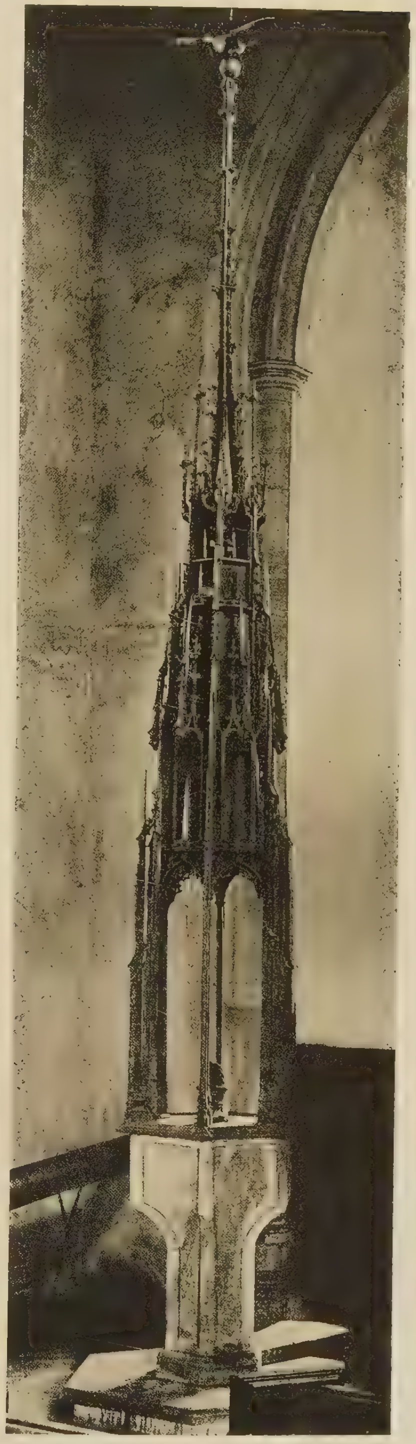
It is generally believed that the greatest amount of destruction was done during the great Rebellion. Certainly no order for the removal of the font-cover is known to exist; indeed, one constantly finds post-Reformation bishops ordering the font to be provided with a cover with a secure lock. The notorious iconoclast, Dowsing, is known to have visited Ufford, but evidently the task of destroying it was too heavy for him. Certainly all the work of destruction has not been due to iconoclasm. Font-covers are very lightly constructed of thin material, and are sadly liable to the attacks of worms and rot, and to breakage by carelessness or misuse.



GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL, WOODEN EFFIGY AND TOMB OF COUNT ROBERT OF NORMANDY

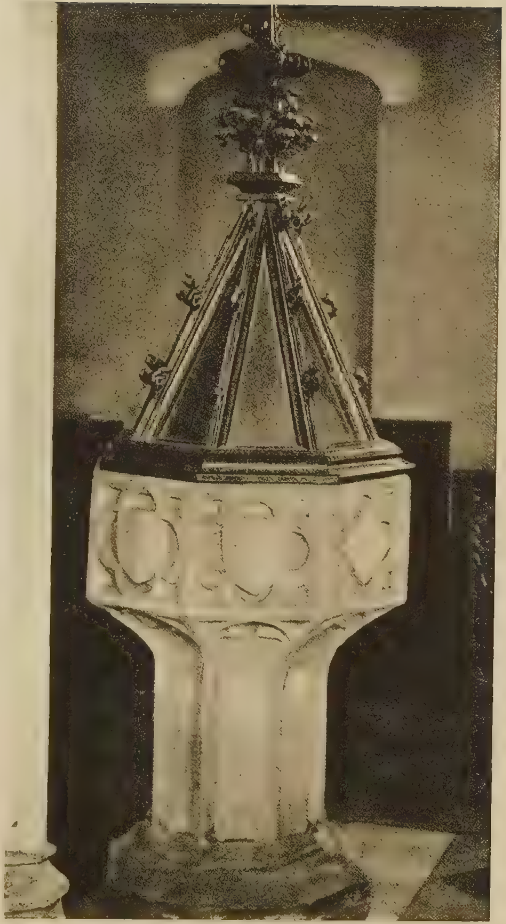


HALIFAX, YORKS., COUNTER-WEIGHTED

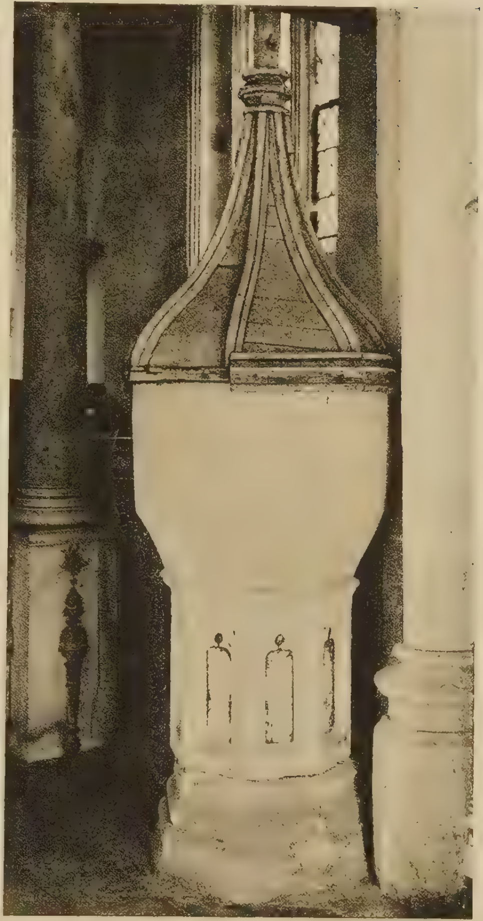


CASTLEACRE, NORFOLK, TELESCOPIC

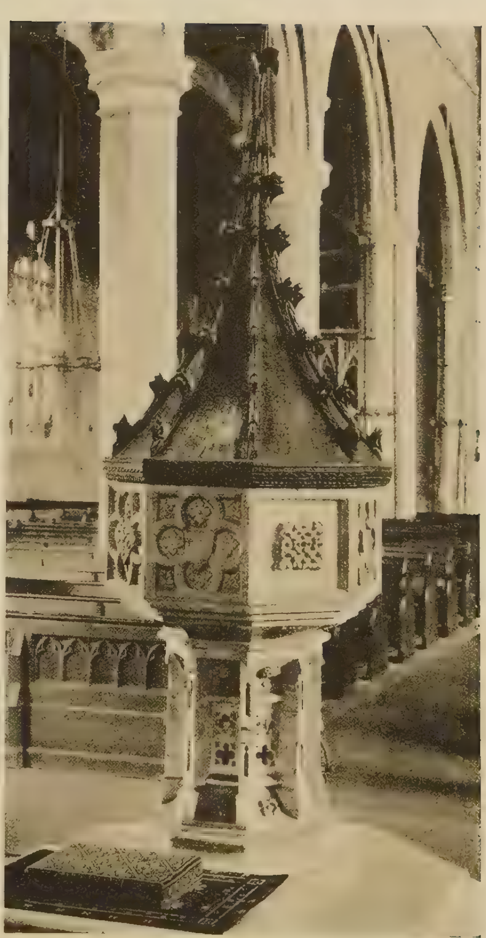
THE PYRAMID FONT-COVER



MONKSILVER, SOMERSET,
STRAIGHT ANGLE RIBS

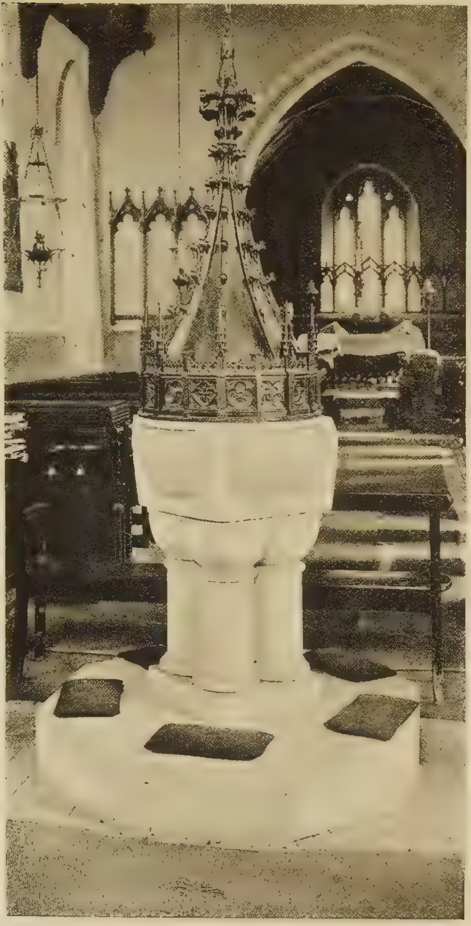


RYCOTE, OXON,
OGEE ANGLE RIBS

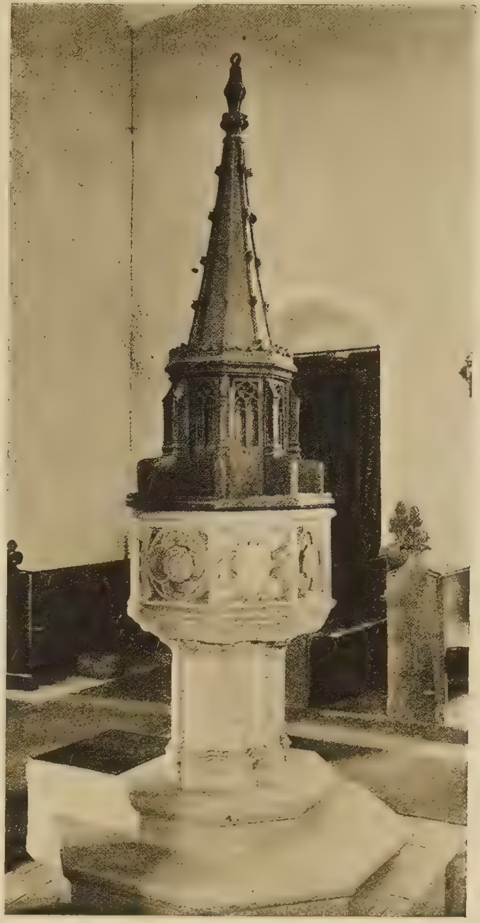


PINCHBECK, LINCS.,
CARVED ANGLE RIBS

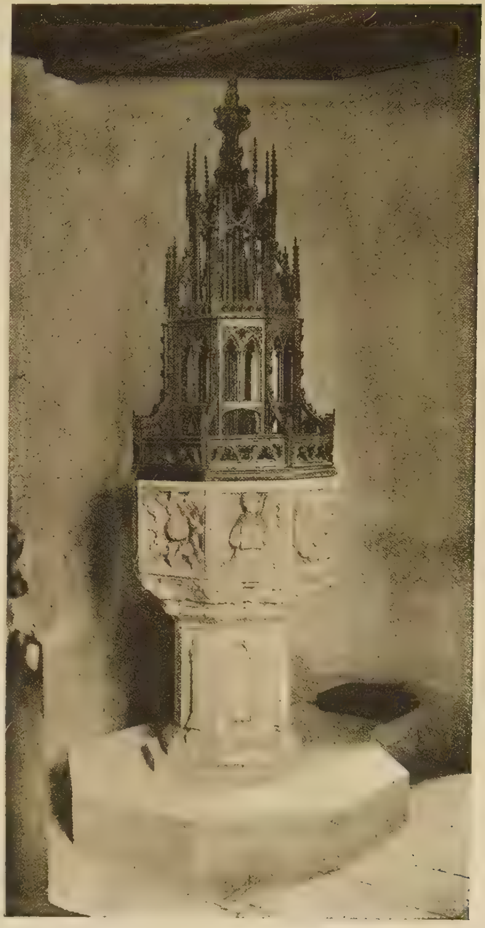
SUFFOLK FONT-COVERS—THE PYRAMID AND DRUM AND TABERNACLE TYPES COMPARED



ASBOCKING, SUFFOLK,
LATE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

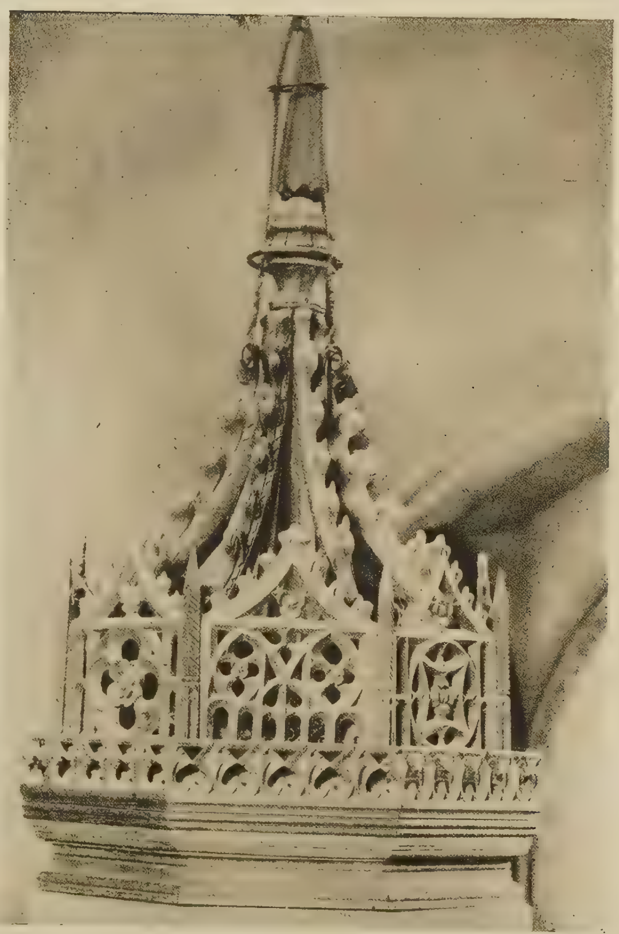


FROSTENDEN, SUFFOLK,
EARLY FIFTEENTH CENTURY

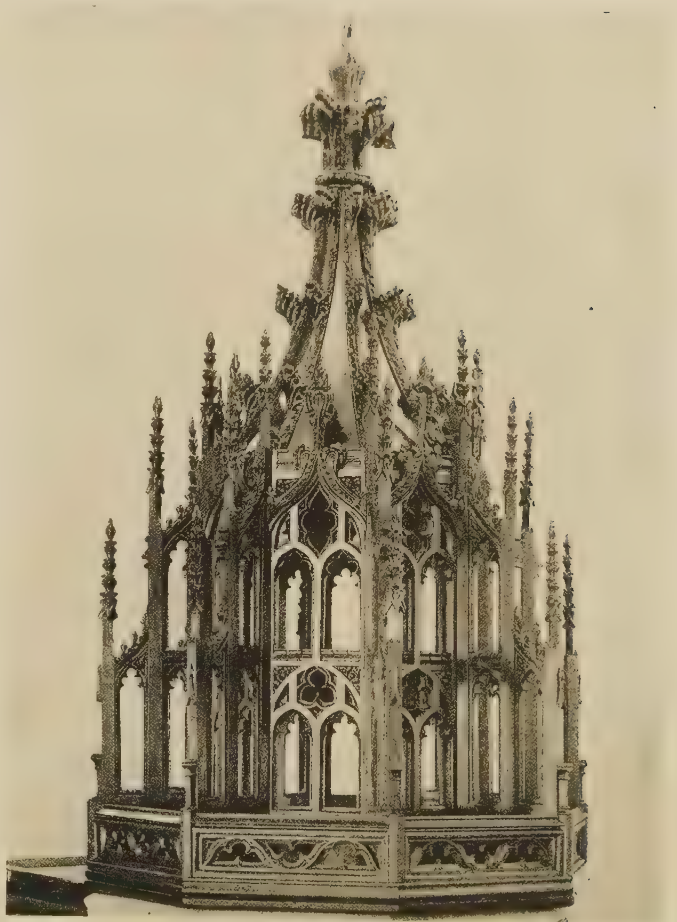


COPDOCK, SUFFOLK,
TABERNACLE WORK

SUFFOLK FONT-COVERS—SIMPLE TABERNACLE TYPES

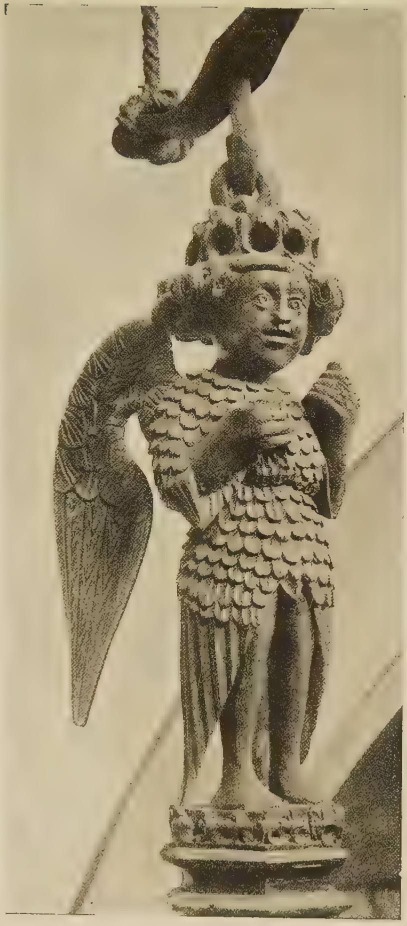


FINNINGHAM, SUFFOLK, WITHOUT BUTTRESSES

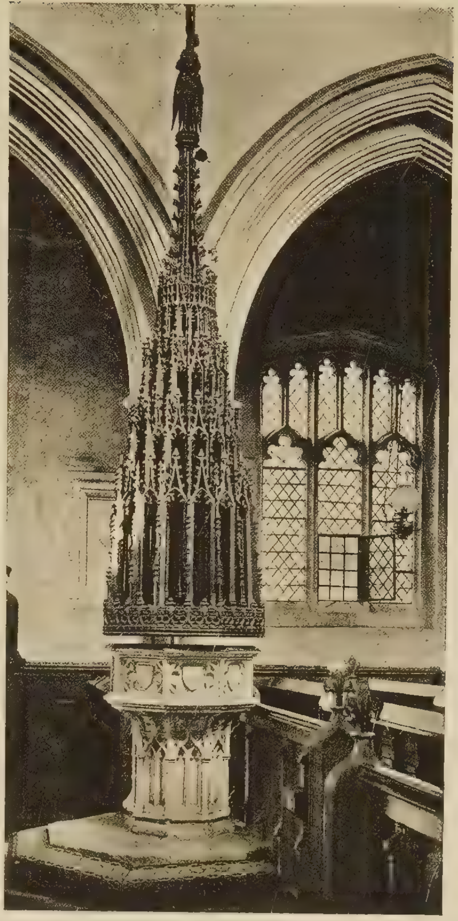


BARKING, SUFFOLK, WITH BUTTRESSES

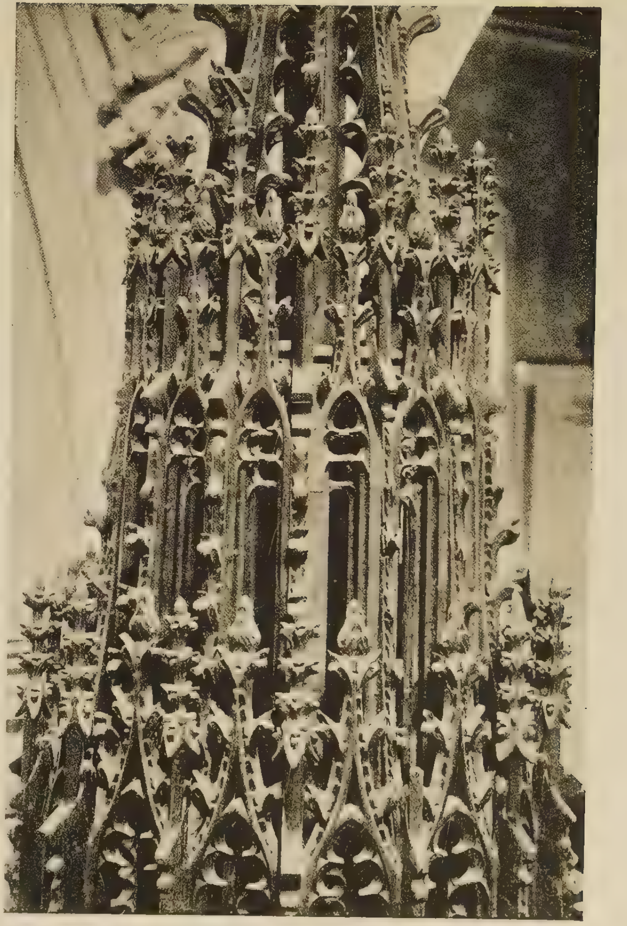
A RICH MIDLAND EXAMPLE



ANGEL FINIAL.

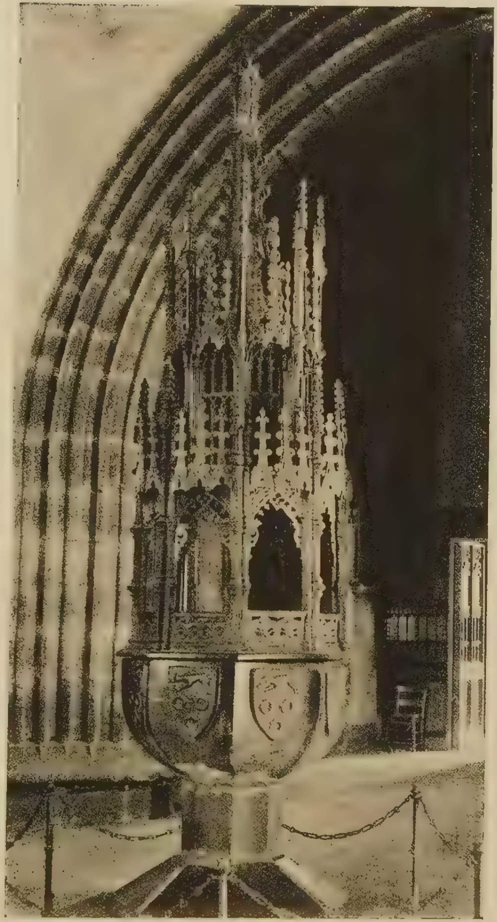


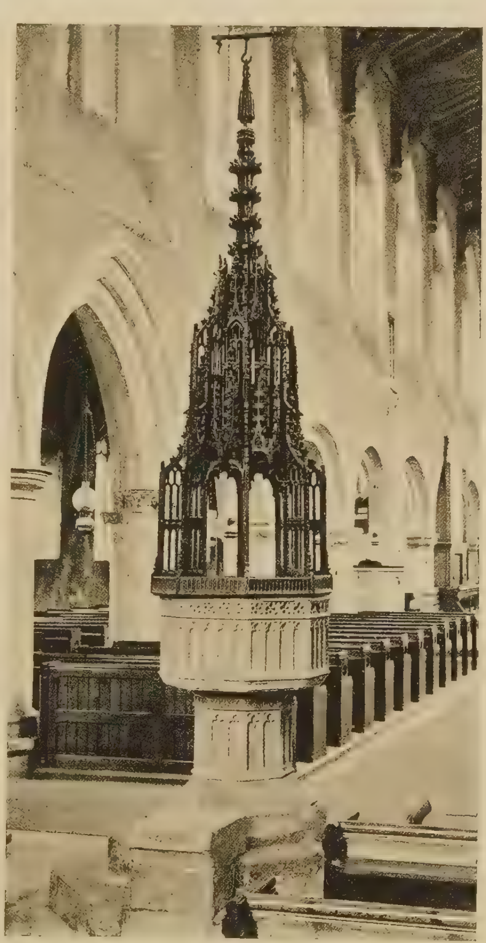
EWELME, OXON

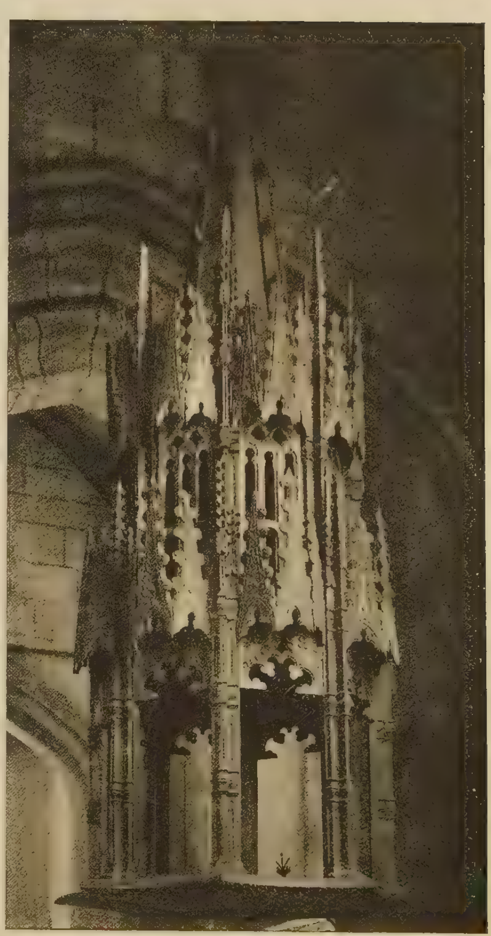


DETAIL OF TABERNACLE WORK

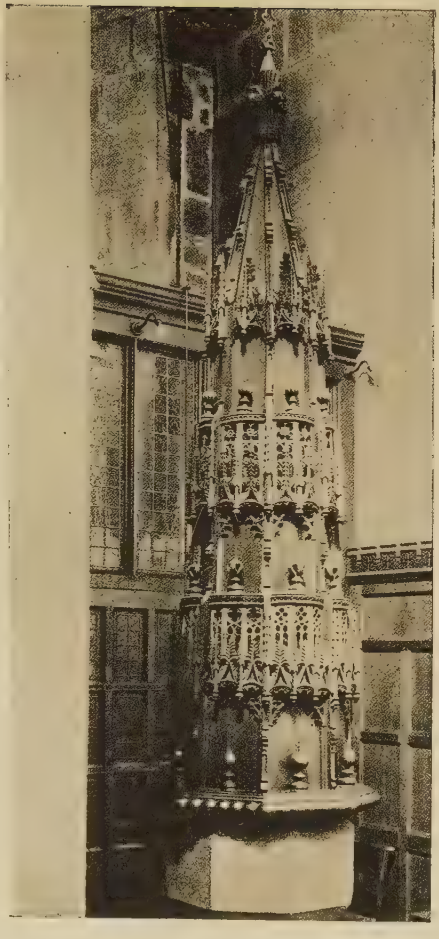
NORTH-EASTERN TYPE OF TABERNACLED FONT-COVER—WITH OPEN LOWER STAGE


NEWCASTLE ST NICHOLAS

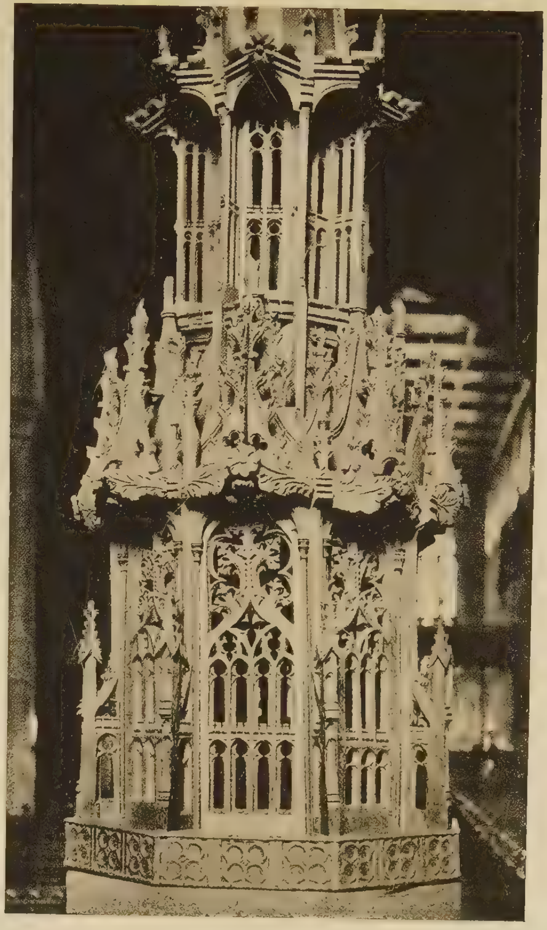

FRIESTON, LINCS.


NEWCASTLE ST JOHN

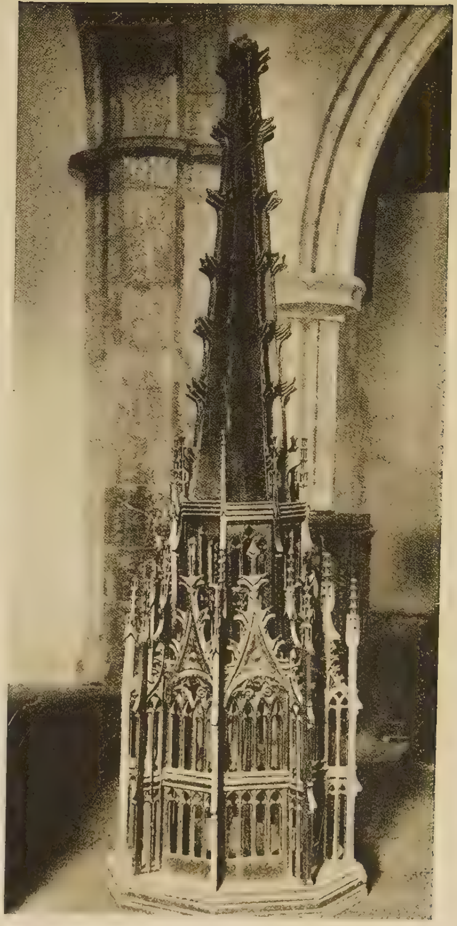
YORKSHIRE FONT-COVERS—TABERNACLE TYPE



ALMONDBURY, YORKS., BALLS POST-REF.

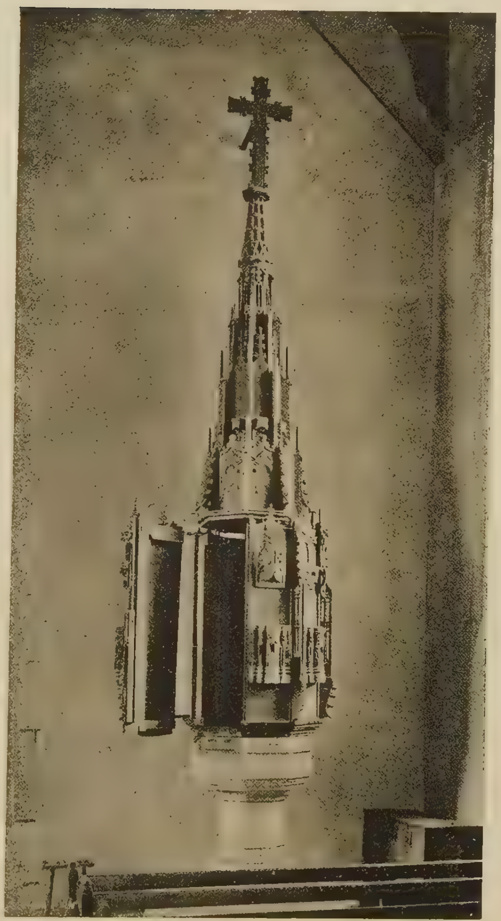


HALIFAX, YORKS., CANOPIES MUTILATED

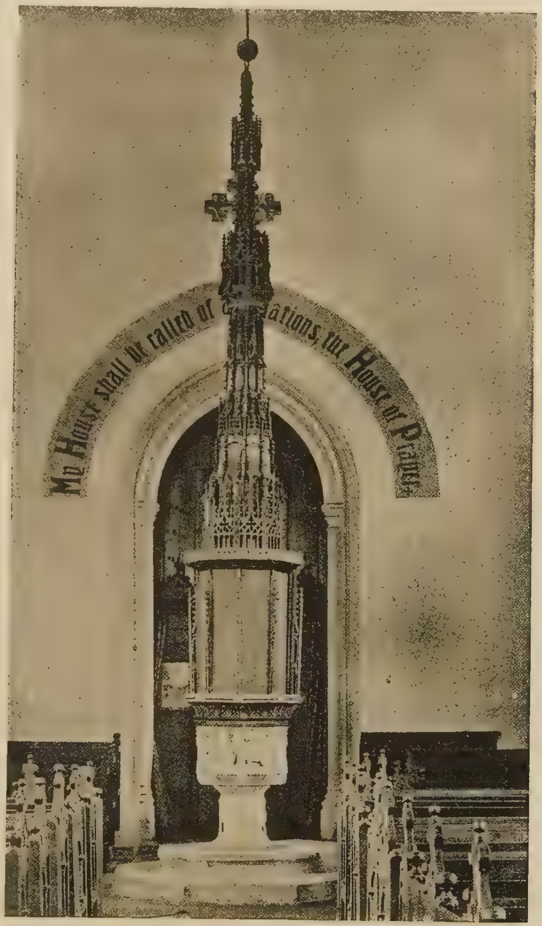


WELL, YORKS., LATE XVTH CENTURY

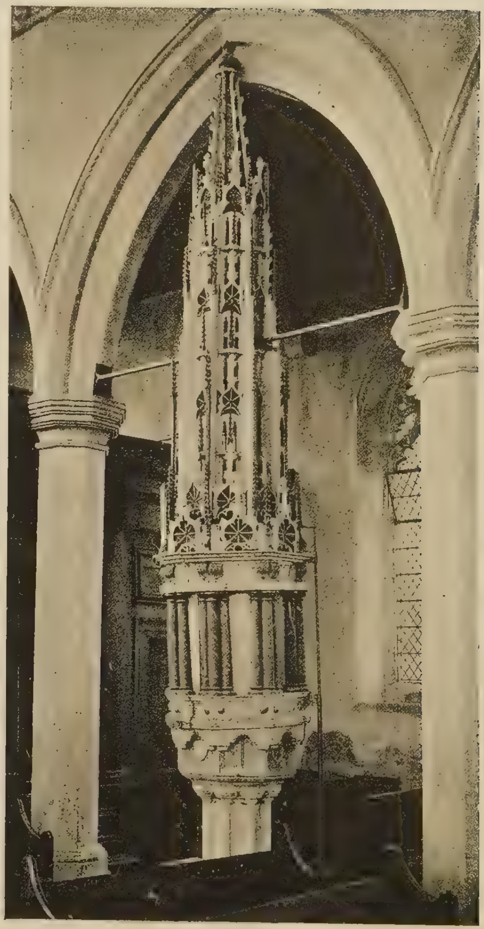
EAST ANGLIAN TELESCOPIC FONT-COVERS—ALTERED INTO TRIPTYCH TYPE



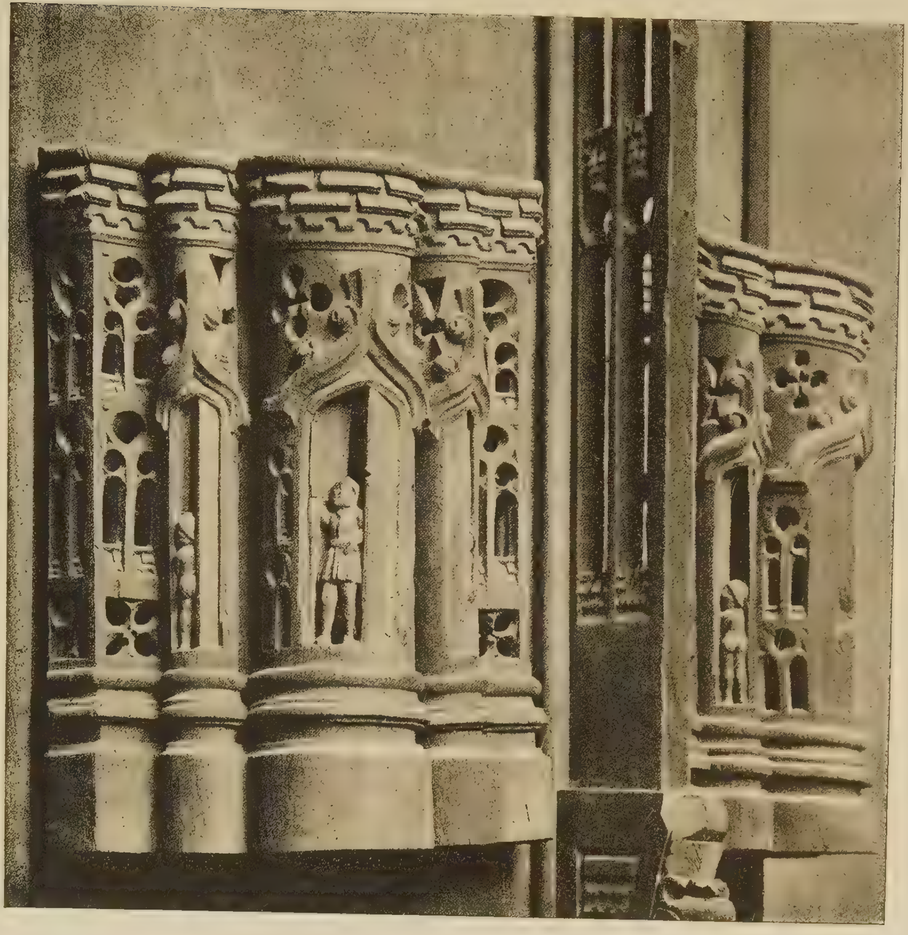
HEPWORTH, SUFFOLK



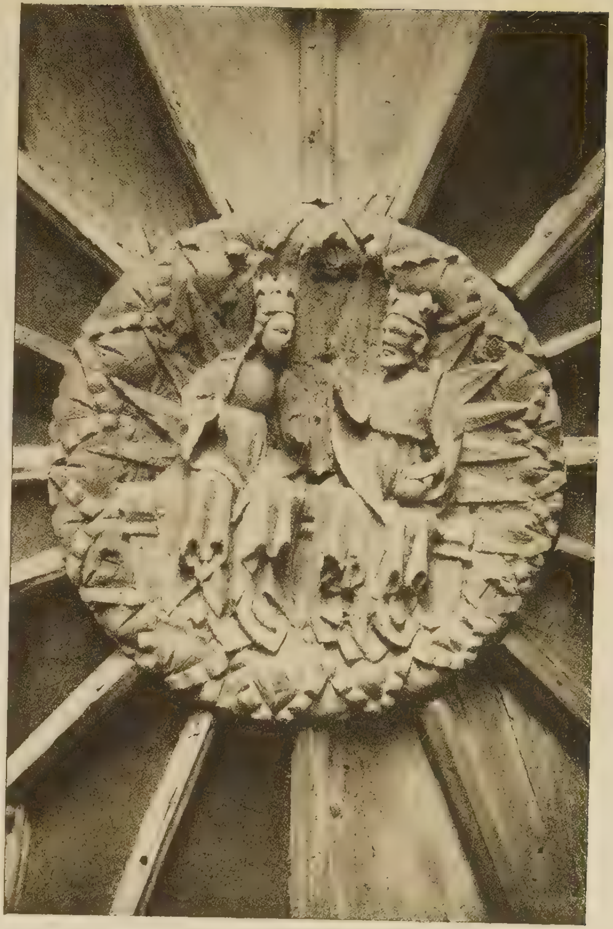
WORLINGWORTH, SUFFOLK



TERRINGTON ST CLEMENT, NORFOLK

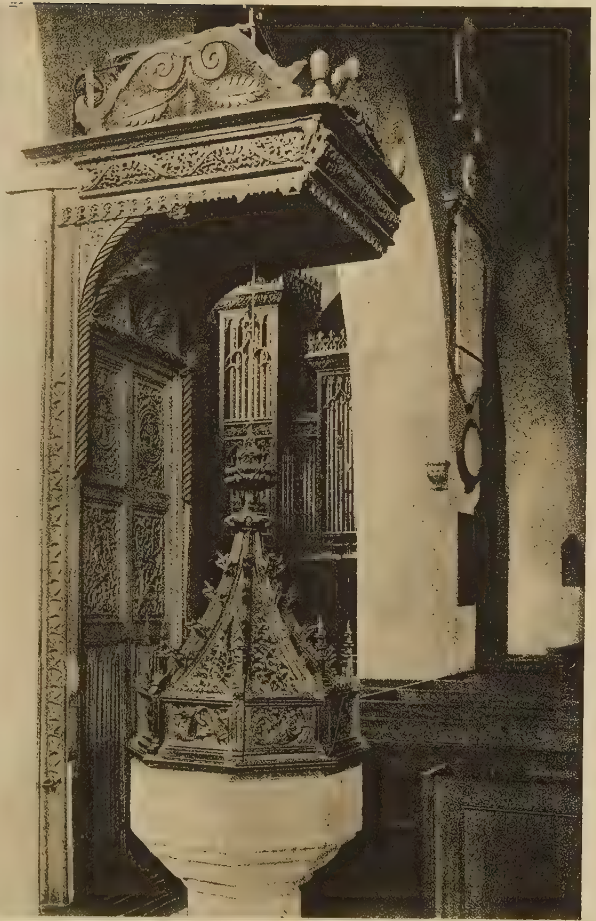


HEPWORTH, SUFFOLK, DETAIL OF BASES

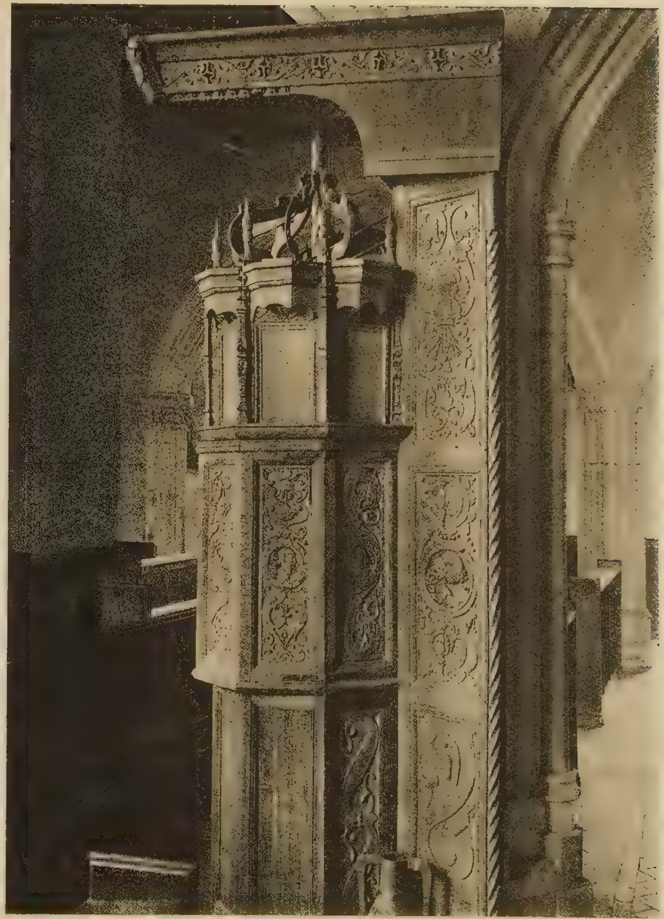


NEWCASTLE ST NICHOLAS, BOSS OF VAULT

THE FONT-COVER AND CANOPY IN THE WEST

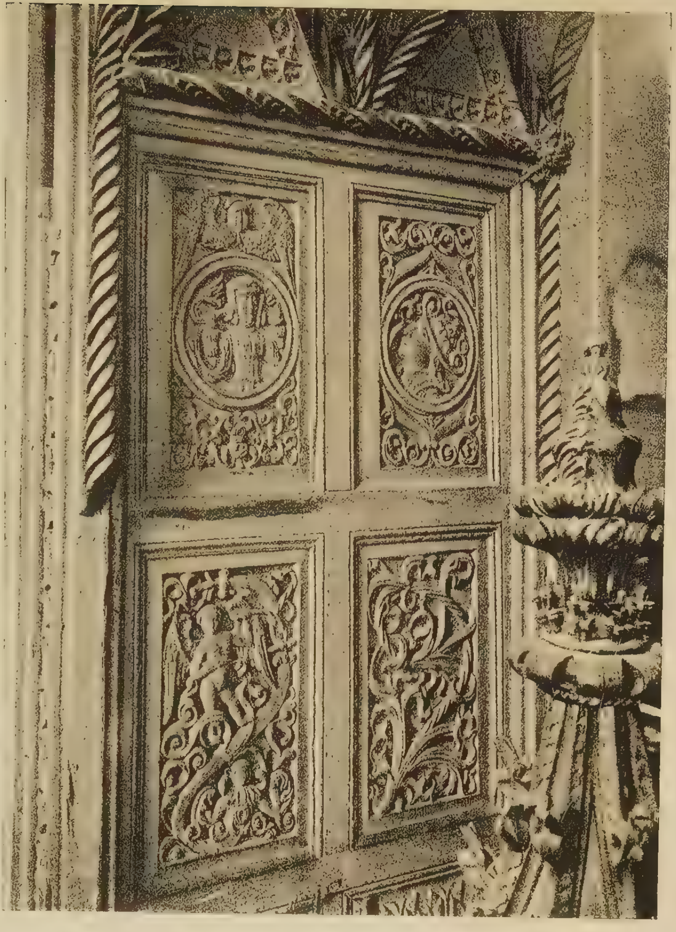


PILTON, DEVON

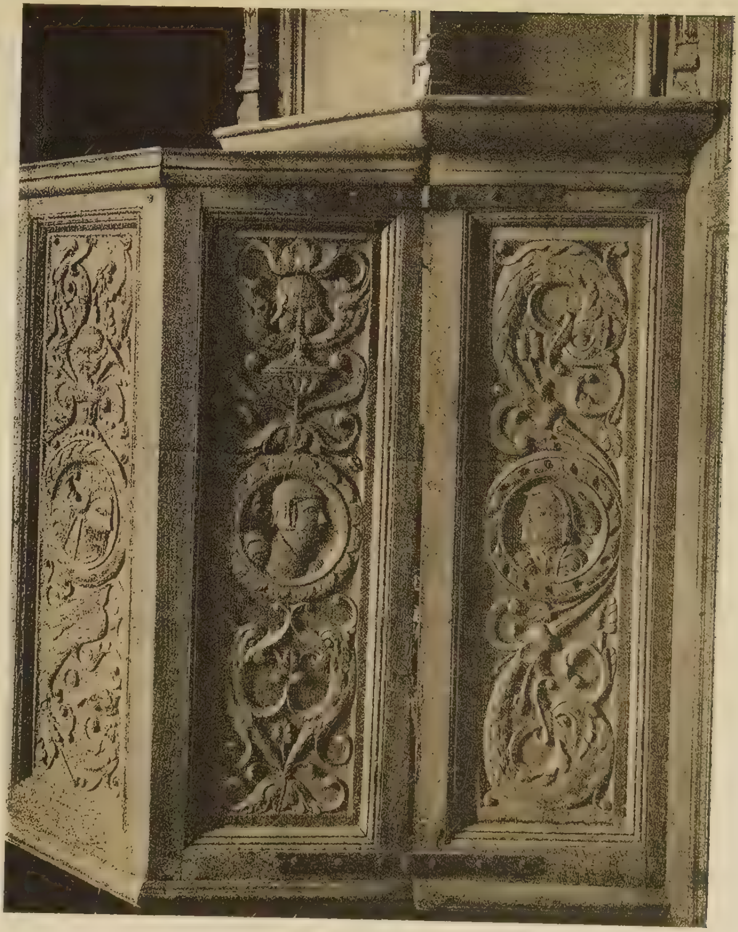


SWYMBRIDGE, DEVON, TRIPTYCH

THE ORNAMENT OF THE FONT-COVER—WESTERN TYPE

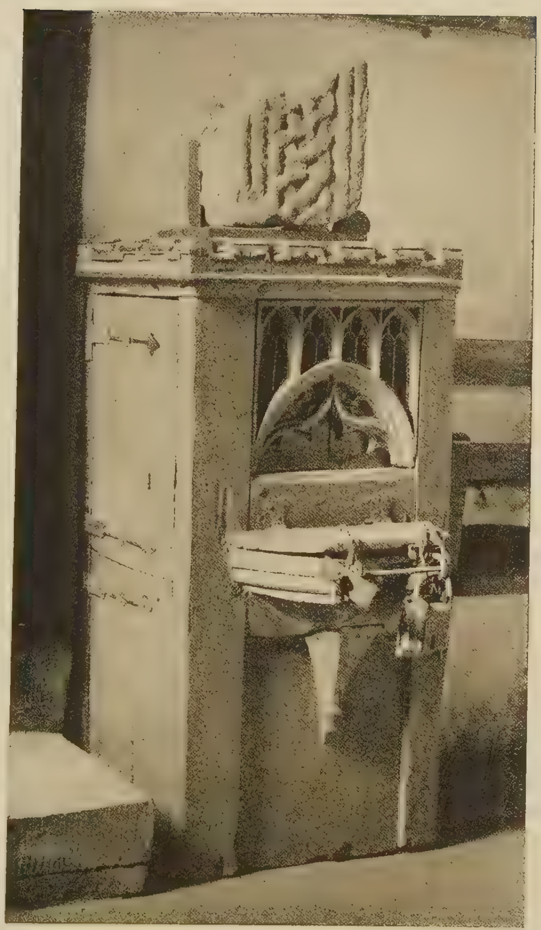


PILTON, DEVON, EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY

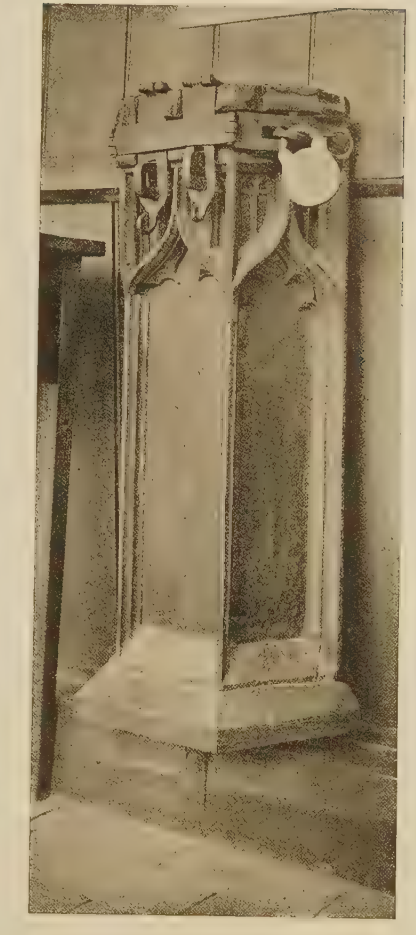


SWYMBRIDGE, DEVON, EARLY RENAISSANCE

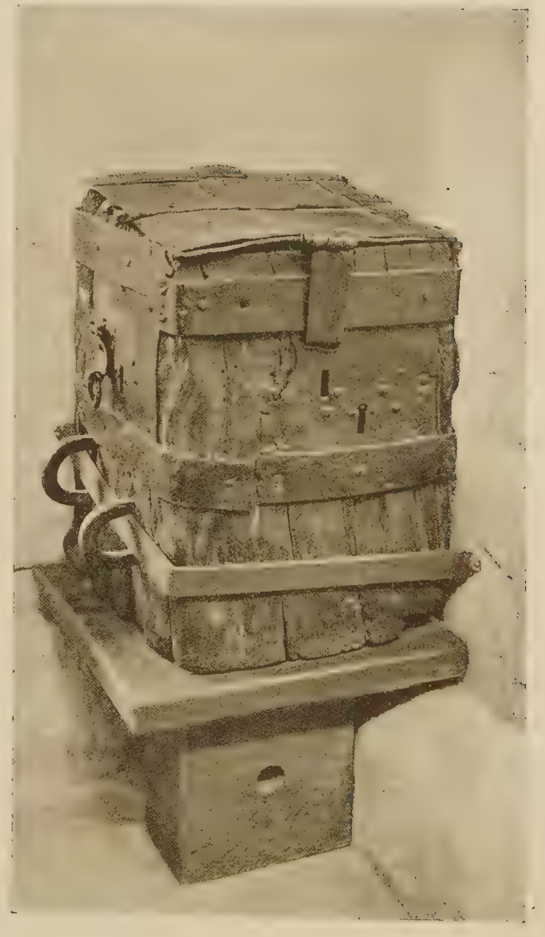
THE ALMS BOX



WENSLEY, YORKS.



BLYTHBURGH, SUFFOLK



BLYTH, NOTTS.

VII

TOMBS AND MOVABLE FITTINGS

ALMS BOXES

THE earliest orders for the placing of alms boxes in churches suggest that a trunk of a tree, suitably hollowed, would be a convenient form of box, presumably because of the difficulty of carrying off so ponderous an object. Several such alms boxes exist. At Clynnog, Carnarvonshire, the trunk is roughly squared and lies on its side. It has a small rectangular hollow in the middle of one side, closed by a hinged lid with locks. Similar examples are not uncommon, but their interest as works of art is not very great. The ancient alms box at Ludham, Norfolk, possibly of the thirteenth century, represents a different type, in which the trunk stands on end, and the receptacle is bored out of the top. This is a more convenient form, and offers distinct possibilities to the designer. At Steeple Bumstead, Essex, the lower part is shaped into an octagonal shaft with roughly traceried sides, a chamfered base, and a moulded and battlemented capital, supporting a plain iron-bound box. Apparently the whole is carved out of a solid log, and the lower end is embedded into the floor. Blythburgh, Suffolk (340), has an alms box of more refined workmanship. It is designed to stand against a wall, and is half octagon on plan. The sides are decorated with very simple and beautiful tracery, deeply sunk.

Another type of alms box is represented by the charming example at Wensley (340), Yorks., which is usually described as a reliquary. The actual box is designed on the lines of a corbel piscina, affixed to the front of a cupboard with doors at the side. The piscina motive is carried on by the arched and traceried panel in the front, above the corbel. The cupboard may possibly have contained relics, and the box may have been intended for the alms of those paying their devotions, but this is by no means certain. It is more reasonable to regard the cupboard simply as a convenient heavy object to which the alms box was fixed to prevent removal. The latest development of the alms box was a small iron-bound box, secured to a stone corbel, such as occurs at Blyth (340). The decoration of such a small object, almost entirely hidden by the numerous iron straps, hasps, and locks, was a matter for the blacksmith rather than the wood-carver.

CHESTS

The number of ornaments of metal-work and embroidery which even the smallest and most insignificant churches possessed in the days before the Reformation is clearly revealed by the evidence of churchwardens' accounts and inventories of church goods. These were often very valuable and fragile, and their safe-keeping must have given trouble and cause for anxiety to the churchwardens. Only a small number of churches had vestries or treasuries where these goods could be stored, and there is evidence to prove that many of them were kept in the houses of the priest, the wardens, or other responsible parishioners, often the donors. There is no doubt, however, that many of the parish goods were stored in chests, generally near the high altar, while the ornaments pertaining to the various chantries were placed near the chantry altars. It is likely that they stood, as a rule, on the north side of the sanctuary, against the wall, and when low must have been useful as seats for the acolytes.

The earliest chests are of extraordinarily primitive construction, and obviously date from a period anterior to the rise of the joiner's art in the late thirteenth century. The methods employed are those of a mason making a stone coffin. A great log is roughly squared, a slice was sawn off the top to act as a lid, while the lower portion was hollowed out. The process of making such a chest must have been infinitely laborious, and the result is clumsy and not particularly durable. These dug-out chests were often strengthened with bands of iron in addition to the strap hinges and hasps, but they do not appear to have been decorated by the carver.

Another early type of chest is constructed in a more reasonable manner with boards, fastened together with great wrought-iron nails. The ends were generally of considerable thickness, the front and back were fixed to them, and the bottom was grooved into them and additionally secured with nails. These box chests were often almost covered by wrought-iron hinges, straps, and scrollwork by the blacksmiths of the thirteenth century. Yet another early kind of chest, which continued in use for many years, is distinguished by a curved top. These are generally known as trunks, and are rarely decorated in any way.

In the thirteenth century a type of chest of more skilful construction came into use. The front and back were made of two or more wide boards, carefully jointed and tongued or tenoned into two fairly wide styles or clamps, which projected below the boards, forming legs to raise the chest above the damp floor. The ends were dovetail-housed into the front and back, and were often sloped inwards towards the top to admit of a curious hinge device. The boards forming the lid were clamped together with rather stout but narrow battens at each end, which were slot-tenoned to the front and back styles. The back tenons were pinned, the pin forming the pivot on which the lid turned. These clamped chests are almost devoid of ironwork, save for the hasps of the locks, but they are sometimes bound with wrought-iron straps, passing round the bottom, to prevent its giving way under the weight of the contents. When the ironwork is unimportant the front of the chest is often more or less richly adorned with roundels of sunk chip carving of a sort unknown in any other church furniture, and strongly reminiscent of Norman stone carving, as at Earl Stonham (348). These roundels are sometimes small and rather tame in design, but in many cases they are large, of varied patterns and extremely decorative. The projecting horns of the styles which form the feet of the chest are sometimes shaped, or even carved, into the form of a little arch, turned so that the springing is horizontal, as at Bloxham (348). This is very quaint and unreasonable. As the thirteenth century advanced, the logical idea of treating the styles differently from the horizontal boards came into being. Thus, at Clymping there is a fine chest with chip-carving roundels and rectangular panels on the styles, while the boards have a little trefoiled arcade, carved in the solid. This treatment occurs elsewhere, but generally the shafts of the arcade, which were planted on, have long disappeared.

As in all other branches of thirteenth-century wood-working the arcade finally developed into a band of tracery, as at All Saints, Hereford (348). St Mary Magdalen, Oxford (349), has a fine chest of the end of the thirteenth century, with a band of geometrical two-light windows carved in the solid on the upper board, while the mullions which were planted on the lower have been lost. The ends of the chest are reinforced with battens, crossing one another in the manner of a portcullis, and iron straps bind them to the front and back styles, dividing them into rectangular spaces, each of which is carved with a dragon and foliage, all of the same pattern. The lid, by exception, is decorated with trefoiled arcading, which has almost perished. This chest is one of the oldest of a lovely series, in which the dragon carvings of the styles are developed into the most varied and engaging beasts imaginable, while the traceries are grouped into two- or three-light windows beneath steep crocketted gables, often with splendid grotesques in the spandrels, as at Wath, Yorks. (349). The tracery is much allied to continental work of the fourteenth century. It is carved somewhat after the manner of the chip carver ; that is to say, there are no fillets to the tracery, simply sharp arrises, and the sinkings are scooped out instead of being properly sunk and moulded. The fertility of invention displayed is astonishing, but the intersections of the straight lines, so freely used in the tracery with the circles, are not exactly pleasing.

The rather exceptional chest at Dersingham has little windows, flanked by pinnacled buttresses sunk in each of the styles, and the centre portion is decorated with the evangelistic symbols, very rudely carved in four square panels with borders of birds and rosettes above and below.

Another common fourteenth-century type has a sunk niche, with a saint in each style and a military or chivalrous subject between, generally the history of St George and the dragon, as at York minster (11), or more often a mere tilting scene. Occasionally a conventional representation of an actual battle occurs, as in a chest now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, which is believed to portray the battle of Courtrai.

Huttoft, Lincolnshire (350), has a fine fourteenth-century chest which marks an important change in construction and ornament. It is framed up with corner posts and top and bottom rails. The front is adorned with a continuous range of three-light windows between applied buttresses, which serve to stiffen the construction, like the styles of the earlier type. The tracery is applied, and is worked according to the traditions of the screen-maker, with proper mouldings and cusping. From this example it is a short step to the panelled construction of the glorious flamboyant chests of Crediton, Devon (350), or North Frodingham, Yorks., which have wide moulded muntins and rails with exquisitely traceried panels and richly fretted iron lock plates. These were known in the Middle Ages as Flemish chests, and great numbers were undoubtedly imported from the Continent, but many, though of foreign design, are of native workmanship, judging from the technical details of the tracery and cusping, and probably hailed from the great carving centres of York, Norwich, or Exeter.

The almost total absence of rectilinear tracery on chests is very remarkable.

Towards the end of the fifteenth century linen-fold panels were often used instead of tracery. These are generally found in conjunction with honeycomb shafts applied to the muntins, as at Dinton, Bucks., which is of doubtful antiquity.

COPE CHESTS

In monastic or cathedral churches large chests of semicircular or quadrant shape have sometimes survived. The semicircular shape allowed of each cope being laid flat on the top of the other without folding, but occupied a tremendous amount of floor space. With the quadrant form each cope had to be folded. Two folds were necessary, namely at each side to avoid creasing the hood, so that the orphreys lay side by side. Neither arrangement was very satisfactory, for if one of the lower copes was required, those above it were necessarily removed from the chest. Indeed it seems likely that these chests were used for the plain quire copes which were worn over the surplice in many conventual and cathedral establishments, rather than for the richly embroidered vestments used by the celebrant at mass or the executor of the office. They went out of use in most places towards the end of the thirteenth century, and very few are left.

They are very simple in construction. There are stout corner posts into which the top and bottom rails of the sides are tenoned. The space between these rails is filled in with thin panels. In the quadrant-shaped chest at Wells (351) the sides are adorned with the remains of an arcade, the trefoil-headed arches of which are cut out of the top rails, the bases out of the bottom rails, while the shafts, all of which have disappeared, were affixed to the panels. The workmanship is not particularly good. That at Gloucester, which is semicircular, and the quadrant chests at York (351) are even more severely simple, save for their wrought-iron hinges. No chest of a late date exists, for in later years the greater convenience of the hanging cupboard entirely superseded the earlier form, which, though it may have been suitable for the thin limp vestments of the thirteenth century, must have been intolerable when the stiff tapestries and rich embroideries of the fifteenth century were in vogue.

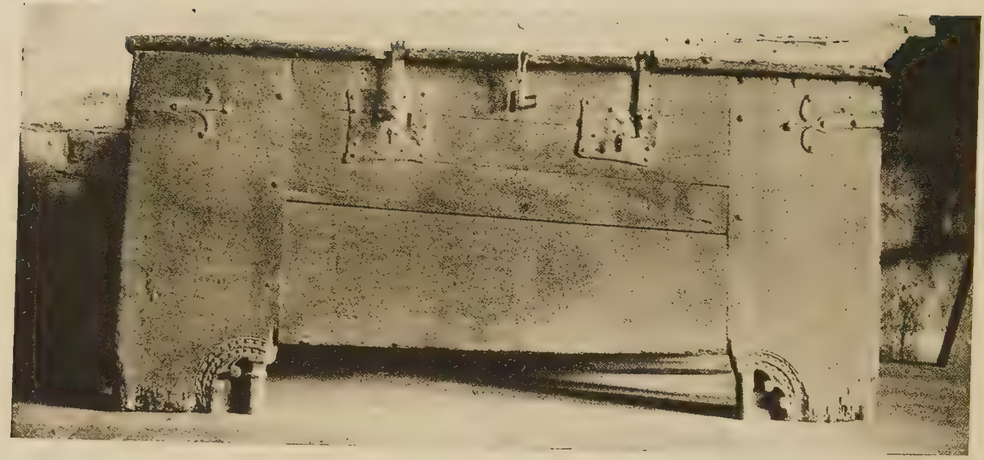
CUPBOARDS AND HUTCHES

A great many of the mediæval cupboards were recesses in the walls of the church, closed by a ledged door of oak, hinged to a rebated stone frame. At Drayton, Berks., there is a good example of the thirteenth century with ornamental iron hinges, but in hundreds of cases the door has disappeared. The splendid thirteenth-century cupboard in the canons' vestry at Chester is a glorified version of this type, with doors of various sizes hung to an oak frame.

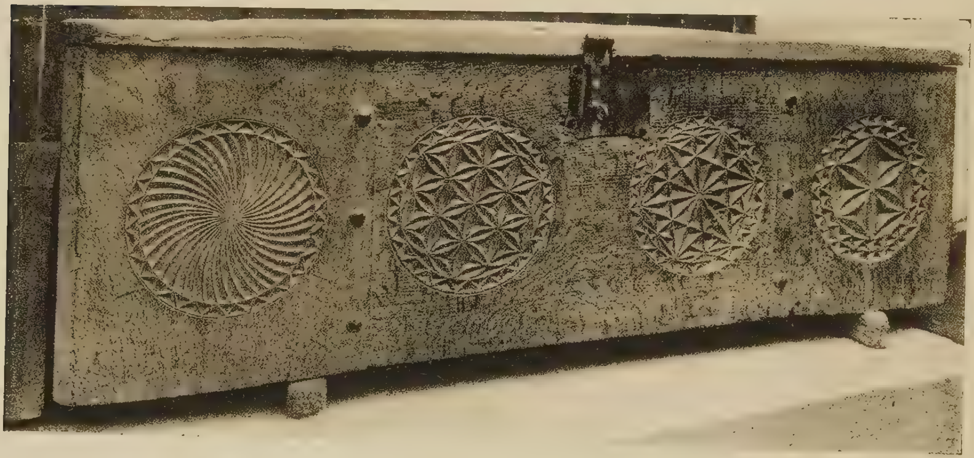
Free-standing cupboards are uncommon, but a few are still in existence, as at York and Carlisle, where the cupboards are divided into compartments—tall narrow ones for the pastoral staff, or perhaps for cross and banner poles, hanging cupboards for chasubles and surplices, and square cupboards for small objects, such as corporals and burses, or even objects of metal-work. The massive cupboard at Aylesbury is fitted with cranes, hinged to the side. These were intended for copes, which were hung over them, and could be removed one at a time without disturbing the rest by swinging out the cranes. The well-appointed vestry of St Peter Mancroft, Norwich, was formerly fitted with cope cranes of this sort, and traces of the arrangement stil exist. The lower stage of the watching loft at St Albans is fitted with massive and well-wrought cupboards of various sizes, and at Selby, before the fire, there was a lovely range of cupboards on the north side of the sanctuary, with beautifully traceried doors which were made to slide up and down like a sash window.

A third variety of cupboard was the hutch, a chest usually mounted on short legs and opening at the front instead of at the top. These are not often met with in churches, and most appear to be of domestic origin, and of late date. The most notable instances are the chest at Boston with a single door and relief medallions of heads of a king and queen, and the fine Minehead hutch which is fitted with a cupboard and drawers, and is beautifully decorated with flamboyant tracery.

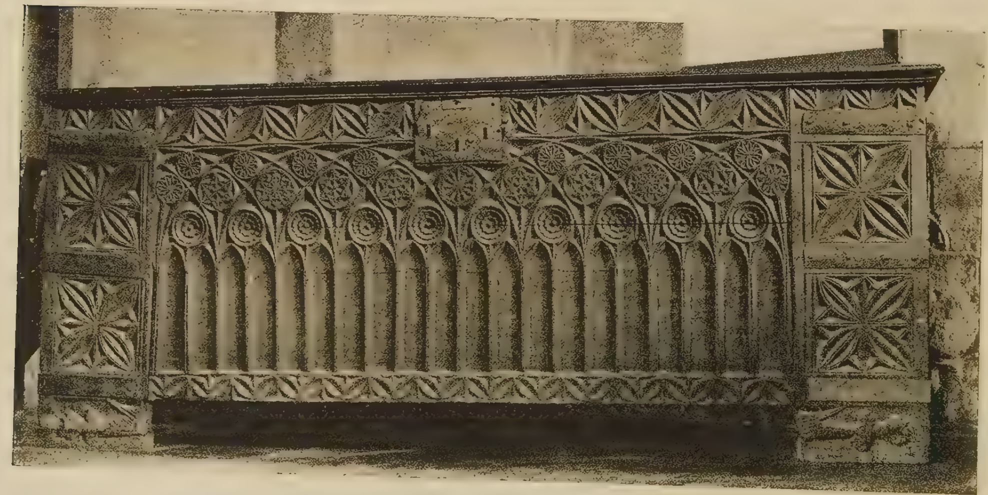
It may be well to mention under this heading the remarkable works at Coity and Hambleden, Bucks. The Coity chest is usually called a shrine, but not all the work is authentic. The low relief carvings of the panels are of admirable design. The Hambleden woodwork consists of eight panels of the Italian type of Renaissance work prevalent at the time of Henry VIII. It is of domestic type, and in its present form it is impossible to ascertain what was its original purpose.



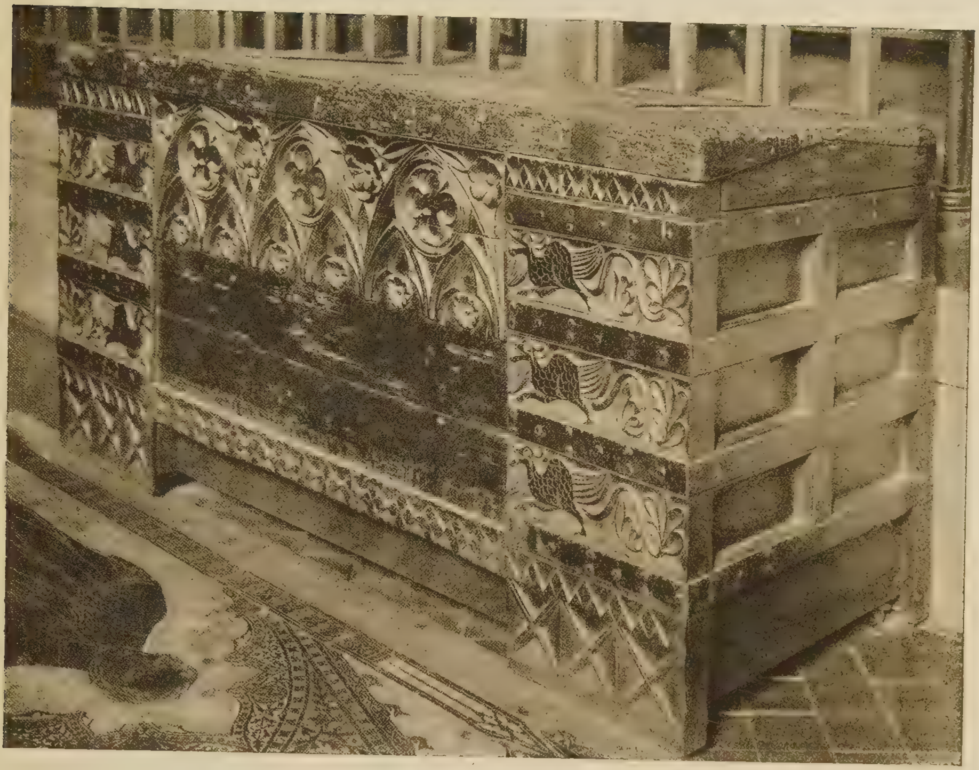
BLOXHAM, OXON, WITH CARVED FEET, THIRTEENTH-CENTURY TYPE



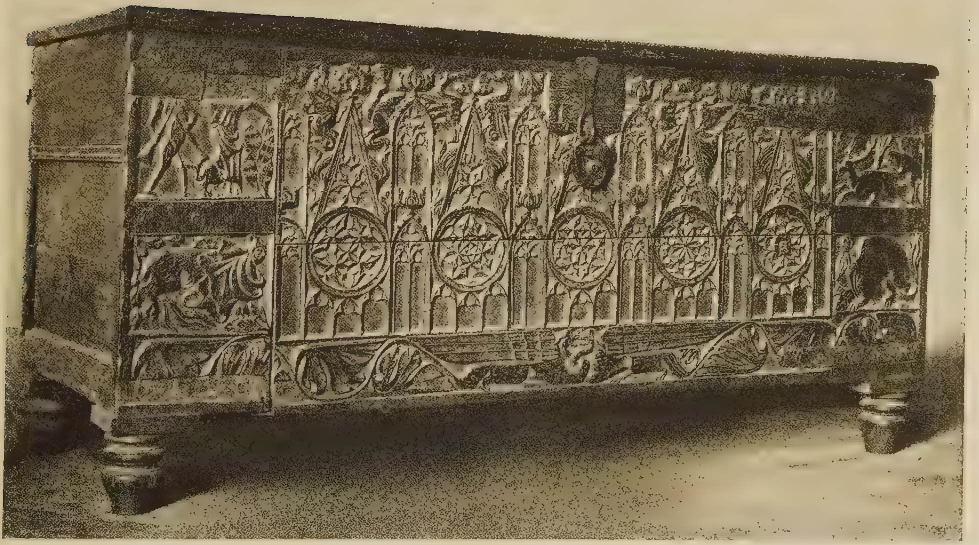
EARL STONHAM, SUFFOLK, CHIP-CARVED ROUNDELS, LATE THIRTEENTH CENTURY



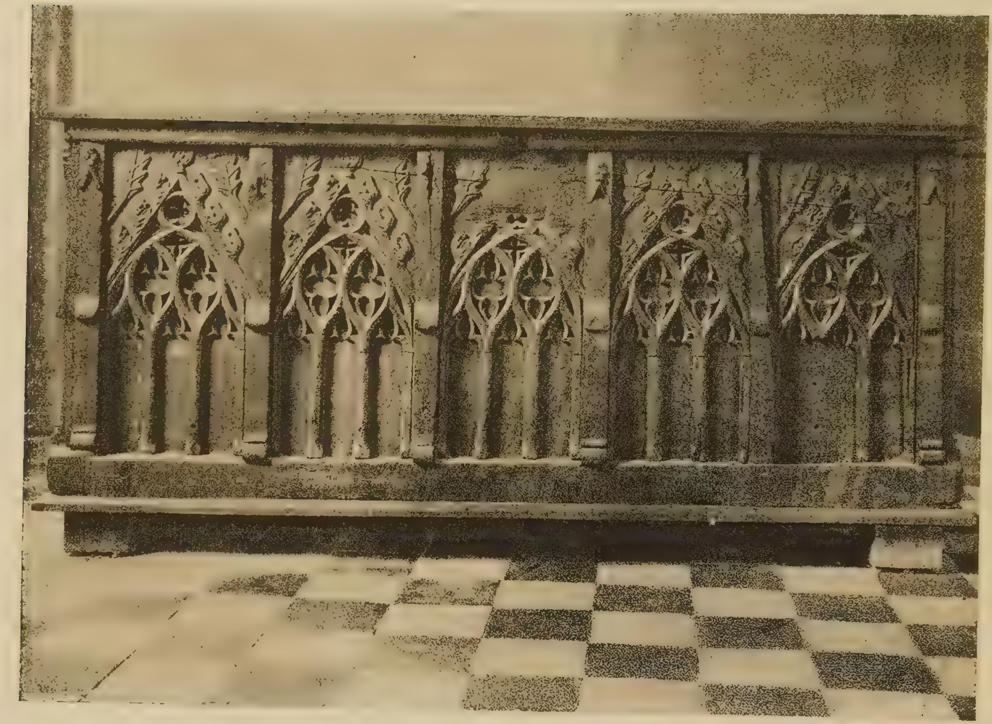
ALL SAINTS, HEREFORD, *c.* 1300



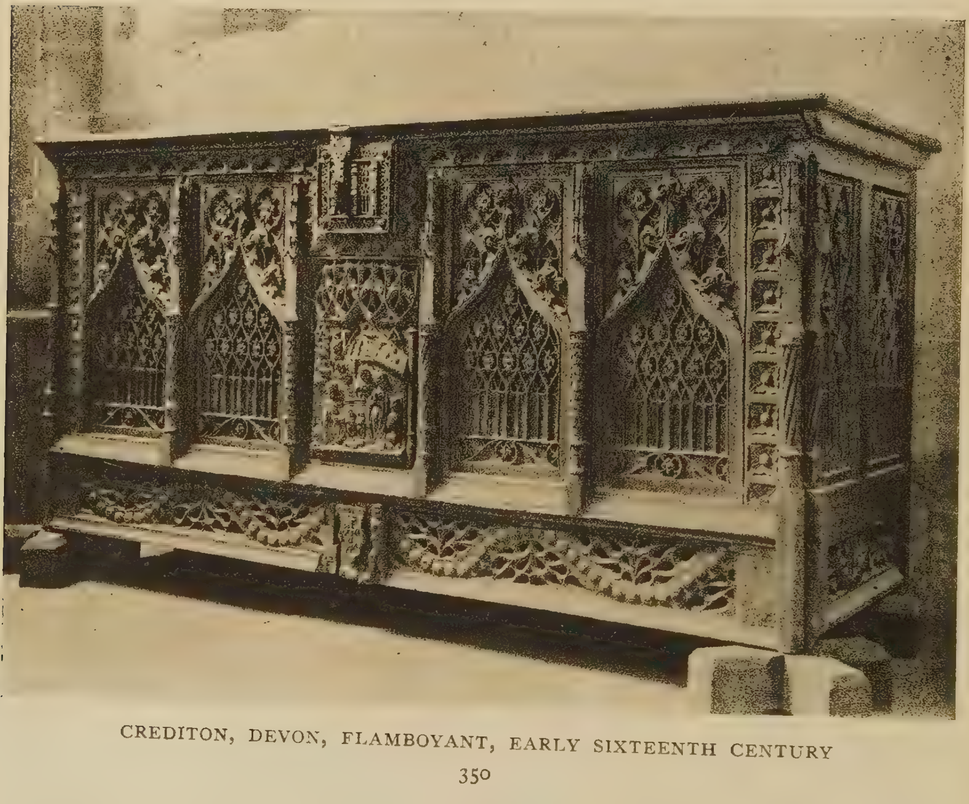
OXFORD ST MARY MAGDALEN, LATE THIRTEENTH CENTURY



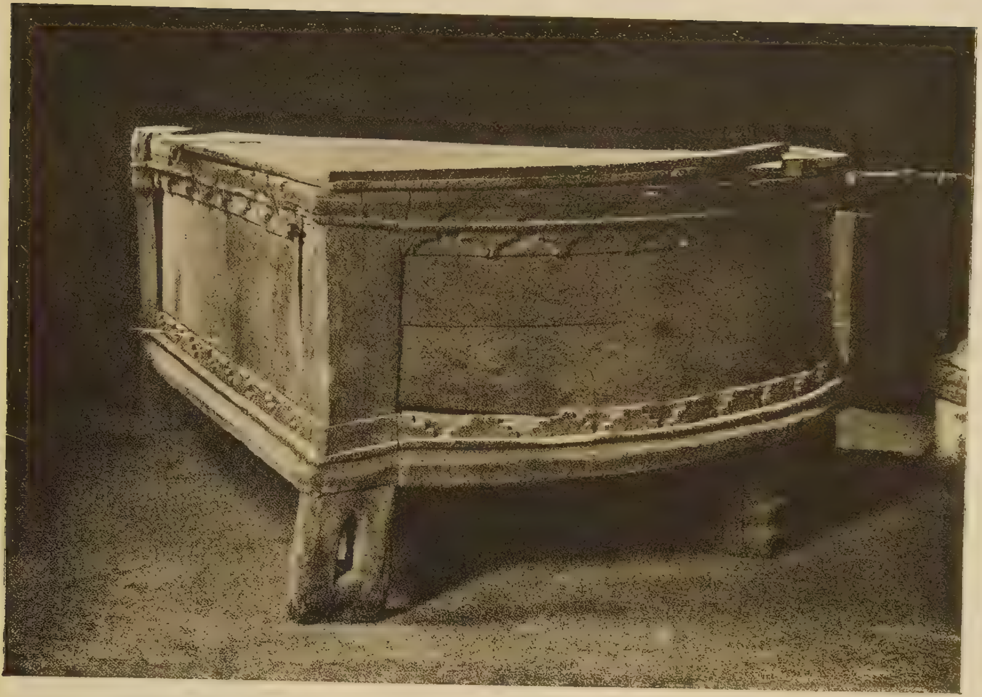
WATH, YORKS., EARLY FOURTEENTH CENTURY



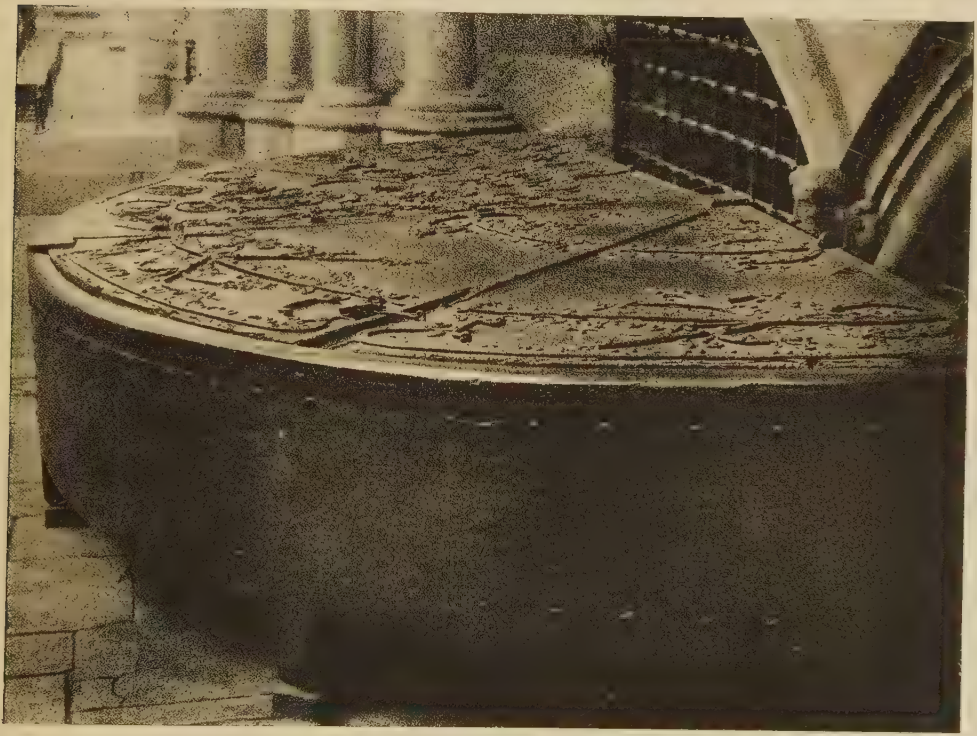
HUTTOFT, LINCS., EARLY FOURTEENTH CENTURY



CREDITON, DEVON, FLAMBOYANT, EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY

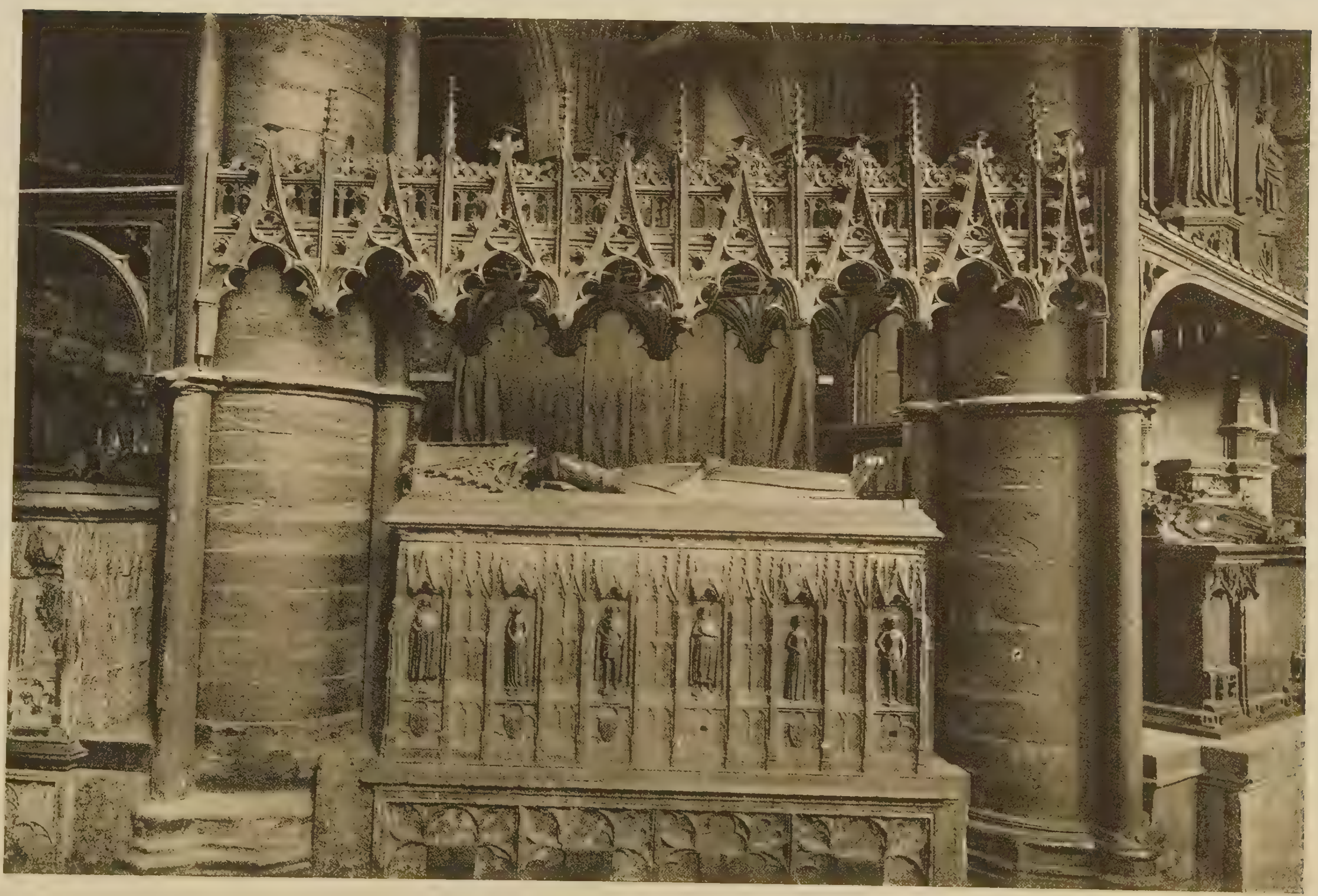


WELLS CATHEDRAL, WITH ARCADED SIDES



YORK MINSTER, TWO COPE CHESTS WITH IRON SCROLL HINGES

THE TESTER OF A ROYAL TOMB



WESTMINSTER ABBEY, TOMB OF EDWARD III.

TOMBS

THERE are still a number of wooden tombs of various dates, and hundreds more must have been destroyed. The idea of a wooden tomb seems a little strange, but the effect when they were decorated in colour must have been almost indistinguishable from that of a stone monument.

One of the earliest is that now bearing the stone effigy ascribed to William Longespée, in the cathedral church at Salisbury. It is a low chest decorated with a simple trefoil-headed arcade, with two-centered hood-moulds and turned shafts, applied to the sides of the chest. The tomb is rather later in style than the effigy it supports.

The effigy of Sir John Pitchford, 1285, at Pitchford, Salop (358), which is also of wood, rests on a simple wooden chest ornamented with a trefoiled arcade cut out of the solid, less elegant in proportion than Longespée's, but springing from clustered shafts. Shields carved in each bay, represented as hanging from hooks by means of a curved strap, give interest to an otherwise commonplace design.

The tomb of William de Valence, who died in 1296, in the abbey church of Westminster, is also of wood, though the base upon which it stands is of stone. Both tomb and effigy were once covered with enamelled metal plates. Though almost all the decoration of the tomb is lost the remains of a similar arcade to that of the Salisbury example are still visible.

There do not appear to be any remains of fourteenth-century tombs of wood, but there are several well-carved wooden effigies of this date, placed on tombs of stone.

By the fifteenth century the low chest tomb had developed into the high tomb. The wooden high tombs were framed up in true joiner's fashion. That supporting the effigy of Robert, Duke of Normandy, in Gloucester cathedral, is an admirable plain example with a deeply moulded framework, and a cornice decorated with a running trail. The fine effigy of the late thirteenth century is also of wood.

At Brancepeth, Durham, there are the remains of a very elaborate and beautiful tomb, but the sides have been removed and the top now rests directly on the plinth, which still retains a series of bases for figures and pinnacles, showing that the missing sides were of rich tabernacle work with angels or weepers.

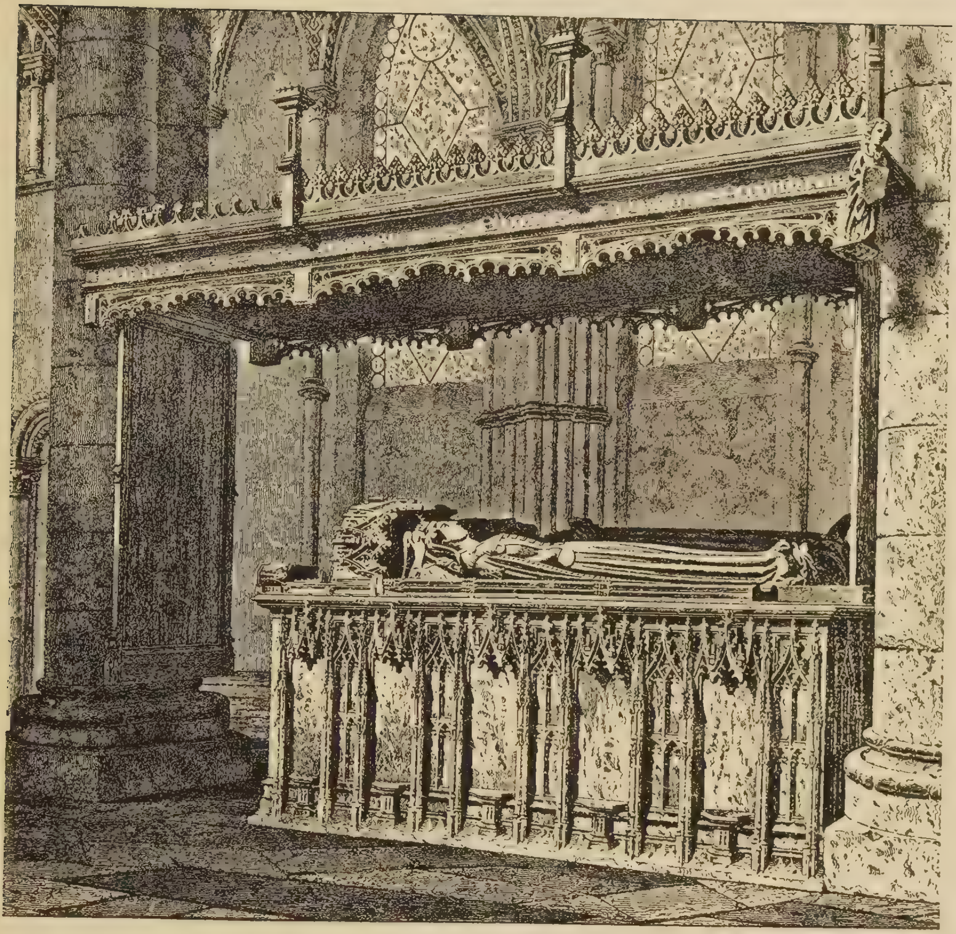
The very plain tomb at Burford, Salop, dating from *c.* 1508, is a striking contrast to this once gorgeous work. There is no other decoration than a chamfered sill and slab and a series of painted shields.

Two fine Yorkshire tombs of joiner's work are of the early sixteenth century. That of Sir Roger Rockley, 1522, at Worsborough (359), has the chest framed up into square panels, each of which is fringed with cusping and contained a large carved shield. A cadaver lies on this chest. Four square corner posts, ornamented with tracery panels and nichework, support a shelf with the living effigy of the knight, and a tester with a traceried cornice. The effect is neat but not very artistic.

The tomb of Sir John Saville and his two wives, at Thornhill (358), dated 1529, is of the same workshop, but infinitely more attractive, though the canopy or tester has been sawn away. The main framing is traceried, and the square panels have cusped circles enclosing shields, while a charmingly cut inscription in elaborate Gothic letters runs round the edge of the slab.

The ingeniously reconstructed tomb, ascribed to Robert Johnson, who died in 1527, now restored to the church of All Saints, Derby (359), is another two-storied example with a cadaver beneath. The living effigy rests on an elaborate chest, carved in the solid with a series of weepers, standing under canopies supported on twisted shafts.

Wooden testers were very commonly suspended over tombs of



CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL, TOMB OF HENRY IV.
E. BLORE, *Del.*

other materials to protect the effigies from falling dust and debris. The testers of the royal tombs at Westminster are absolutely simple, with the exception of that of Edward the Third (11, 352). Those of Henry the Third, Philippa, and Richard the Second are mere roofs supported on moulded beams, with pendant posts and arched braces with pierced spandrels, but that of Edward the Third is vaulted, and has a series of lovely pendant arches along the sides. This beautiful piece of work is executed with unusual perfection of setting out and cutting, but the effect is not mechanical, owing to the perfect design of every detail.

At Canterbury there is another tester over the tomb of the Black Prince. This is a simple flat lid with a moulded curb, battlemented and carved with paterae. The underside is decorated with a painting representing the Holy Trinity.

The finest tester in England is that over the tomb of Henry the Fourth at Canterbury (355). The well-moulded curb is decorated with a fine cresting and delicate pendant tracery. There are angels at the corners and two on each of the longer sides, supporting pinnacled buttresses. The whole is splendidly decorated in colour, the underside having diagonal mottoes and three large shields within wreaths.

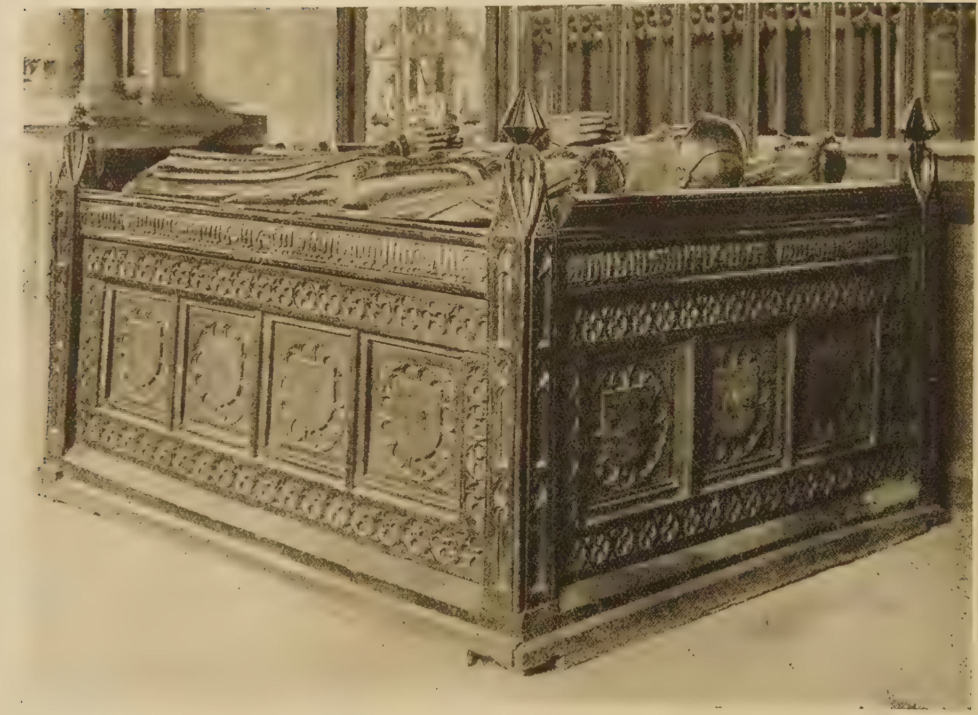
Occasionally a tomb is arranged to come directly under a screen, and the latter is arched over it. This occurs in work of the late fourteenth century at Bottisham, in Cambridgeshire, and there is another example of the early sixteenth century at Fairford, Gloucestershire.

Wood sometimes plays a subsidiary part in tombs of stone. The wooden curb to the alabaster tomb at Thornhill, and the lovely figures of angels on the pinnacles of the tomb of the Duchess of Suffolk at Ewelme, may be cited as examples.

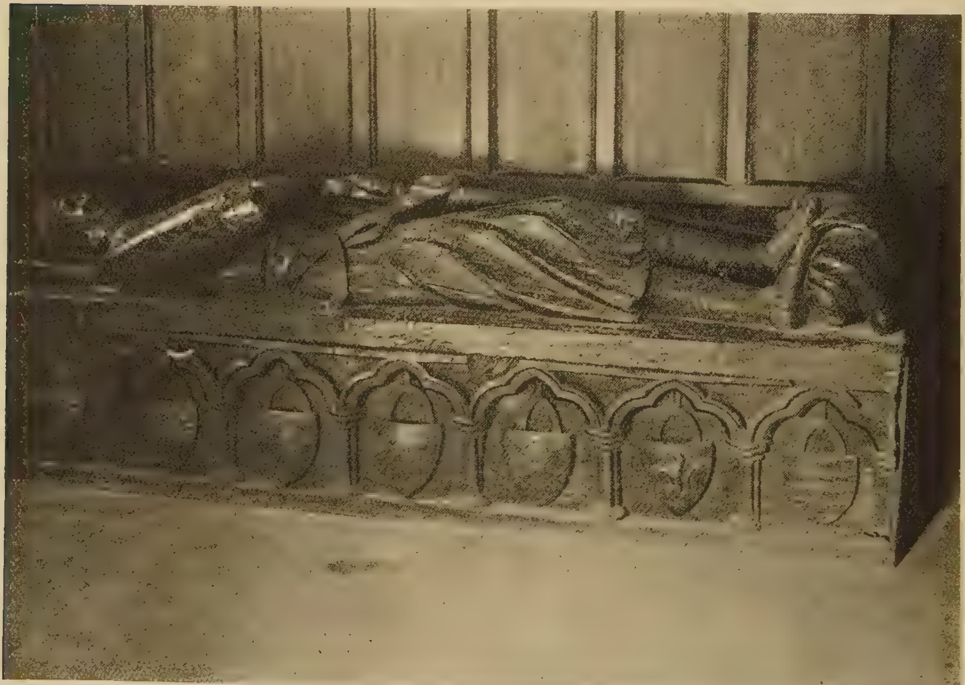
SHRINES AND RELIQUARIES

The people of the Middle Ages had an extraordinary veneration for relics. These were usually kept in gabled chests of painted wood or enamelled metal, or both combined. Strange as it may seem, a few of these have escaped destruction, notably those of various Saxon kings at Winchester, which are decorated in the style of the early Renaissance, and date from the first quarter of the sixteenth century. It has been ascertained that within these chests there are earlier painted wooden coffers. The age of the actual woodwork is uncertain, but the painted scrolls with black-letter inscriptions on a ground decorated with feathery foliage are of the fifteenth century. These interesting reliquaries are placed on the top of the stone screens enclosing the quire. Smaller reliquaries were sometimes placed on the top of the reredos. More important relics were often placed in an elaborate shrine, consisting of a stone base, generally very richly ornamented, on which the actual coffer containing the relics was laid, beneath a gorgeous canopy of tabernacle work, usually of gilded and painted woodwork. The only surviving example of a shrine canopy is that of the shrine of Edward the Confessor at Westminster, which is a rather mean specimen of the early Renaissance, dating from Marian days. It is certain, however, that even the glorious niche-work of the mediæval font-covers and stall canopies was surpassed by these exquisite works of art.

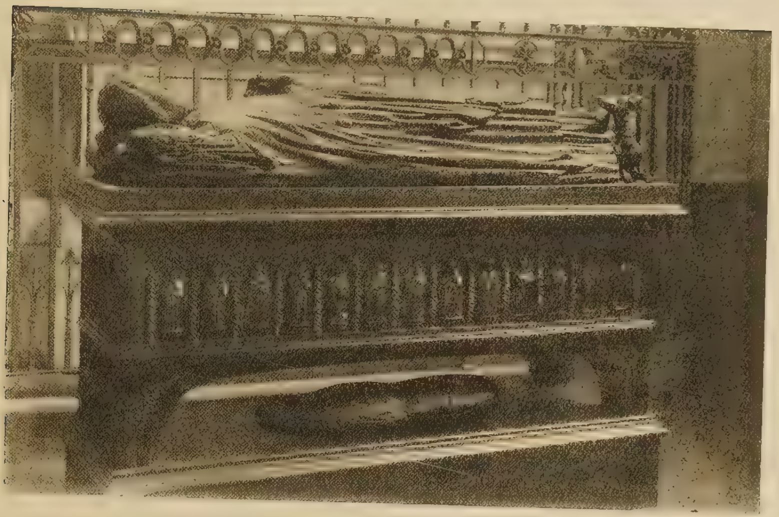
PAULERSPURY, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE, WOODEN EFFIGIES



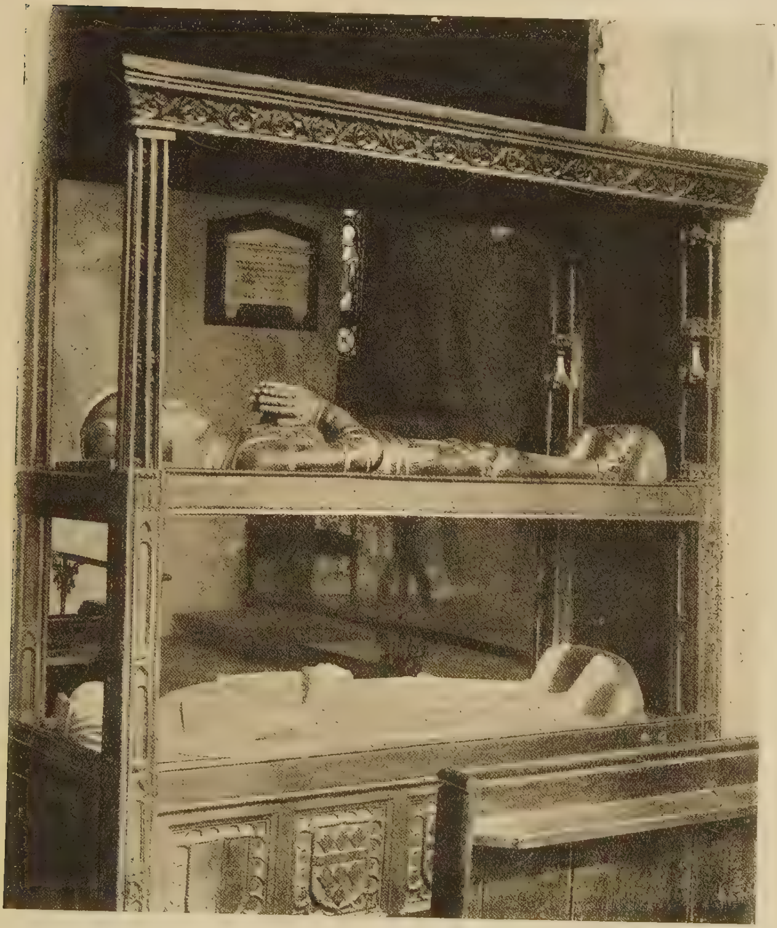
THORNHILL, YORKSHIRE, SIR JOHN SAVILLE, 1529 (CANOPY DESTROYED)



PITCHFORD, SALOP, SIR JOHN PITCHFORD, 1285



DERBY ALL SAINTS, ROBERT JOHNSON, 1527



WORSBOROUGH, YORKS., SIR ROGER ROCKLEY, 1522

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